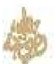
Nida - e - Haqq

THE VOICE OF TRUTH



A'la Hadrat
Mujaddid Imam Ahmed Raza



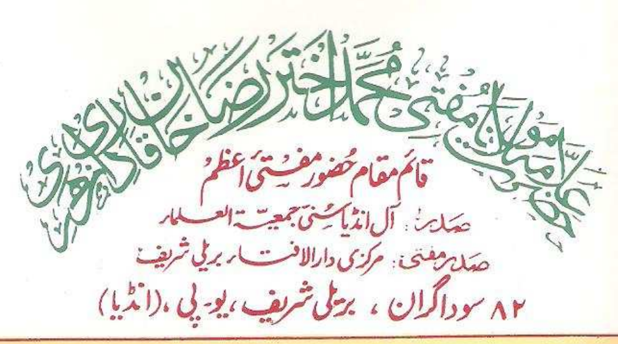
Maryam Qadri

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Ref No. ____________________ حوالہ   Date: ____________________ تاریخ:

In the name of Allah, the most Beneficial and the most Merciful

Countless and Choicest Blessings and Bounties on our Beloved Prophet Syedna Muhammad (Sall Allah o Alaih e Wa Sallam) and His great companions and the Holy Offspring.

I have listened to some excerpts of the book *The Voice of Truth* written by Maryam Dastagir and found it very good. She has made quality research on the life of AlaHazrat (Radi Allah Taala Anhu) and also unmasked the face of deviant cults of today's time. She has also used good references in compiling this book.

May Allah accept her work and give an outstanding success to this endeavor.

Mufti Mohammed Akhtar Raza

Qadri Azhari



Bareilly Shareef

﴾And respect is (only) for Allah ﷻ, His Prophets, and the Faithful﴿
(Surah Al-Munafiqun, 63:8)



In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Ya Rasulallah ﷺ!

Ya Shaykh Abdul al-Qadir Jilani رضي الله عنه!

Ya Pir al-Madad!

Countless *Durood* and *Salaams* upon Sayyiduna Rasulullah ﷺ, his Family, Companions and the Rightetous Servants of the *Ahle Sunnah Wal Jammaah*



This work is humbly dedicated to Hazrat Peerzada Mawlana Chaman Qadri, may Allah عزّوجلّ sanctify his secret and grant him a long life.

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I am convinced that this endeavor was possible, from its very conception to its completion, solely through the grace of my Peer-o-Murshid, Hazrat Mawlana Chaman Qadri, and due to the *baraka* that results from even a weak plea to the Sultan of Saints, Ghawth al-A'zam, Hadrat Shaykh Abdul Qadir Mohiuddin al-Jilani ؓ.

The compiler would also like to thank the people who were instrumental in helping me bring this book into being. First immense gratitude goes out to Hazrat Sahib for recommending the title *Nida-e-Haqq* (*The Voice of Truth*). Her husband, Ghulam Dastagir, for revising much of Chapter Two and Four, and writing *The Apparent Meaning* in Chapter Nine. His devotion to this work and steadfast encouragement despite its demands were immense. Dr. Ghulam Jilani for revising the book and recommending a style that is dispassionate. The General Secretary of Imam Ahmad Raza Academy in Durban, South Africa, Mahomed Yunus Abdul Karrim Qadri Razvi, for making valuable corrections and sharing his research. His tireless proofreading of various drafts was sincerely appreciated. The President of Imam Ahmad Raza Academy, Shaykh Abu-Muhammad 'Abd al-Hadi al-Qadiri Radawi for translating and publishing the works of A'la-Hadrat ؓ into English. His translation of *Tamheedul Iman* is the key which unlocked the door!

Special thanks are owed to Tariq Hasan Khan and Junaid Mohammed Qadri Razvi for clarifying many delicate points.

May Allah ﷻ forgive the compiler for all her shortcomings for the sake and love of Sayyiduna Rasulullah ﷺ. Amin.

Maryam Dastagir Qadri
5th Rajab 1431/18th June 2010
Illinois, USA

CONCERNING ‘ABD AL-MUSTAFA, A’LA HADRAT, MUJADDID IMAM AHMED RAZA رضي الله عنه

South Asian Muslims fondly call him A’la Hadrat, which means “the Great Threshold.” He was the glory of his age. Abundant in graces, he was a man of dignity, honor, and sagacity. He was a true crusader of the *Ahle-Sunnat wal Jama’at*[1] and a master of both the external and internal sciences in Islam. Qadri in Tariqa he penned several poems praising the Sultan al-Awliya, Ghawth al-A'zam[2], Hadrat Shaykh Abdul al-Qadir al-Jilani رضي الله عنه (1077-1166 C.E.). His epithet, as given on most of his correspondence and fatawa, was ‘Abd al-Mustafa, “Servant of the Chosen One ﷺ”. To the believers he was affable and genteel of most kind disposition. A brilliant *faqih*[3] faithful to the Imams of Islamic Law and Doctrine, he was an embodiment of the Prophet’s ﷺ saying, “A single jurist is harder on Satan than one thousand worshippers[4].” His name, Ahmed Raza رضي الله عنه, was chosen by his illustrious grandfather رضي الله عنه, who foretold that the child “will grow up to be pious and knowledgable. His name will gain prominence from East to West[5].” Indeed it did, for he was a *Mujaddid* or Reviver of the 14th Islamic Hijri recognized by venerable scholars from the two sanctuaries (Makkah and Madinah) and the Subcontinent.

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[1] Imam ‘Abd al-Ghani an-Nabulusi رضي الله عنه (d. 1143 A.H.) said: “The right path is the path of Sahabah al-Kiram. Those who follow this path are called the *Ahle Sunnat Wal Jama’ah*. It should not be confused with many heretical groups that appeared after the time of the Companions. **Al-Imam al-Buihaqi said, ‘When Muslims go astray, you should not give up that path even if you are left alone on that path!’**” See Imam Ahmad Raza رضي الله عنه, “Tamheedul Iman,” in *Thesis of Imam Ahmad Raza*, (Durban: Barkaatur-Raza Publications, 2005), tr. Shaykh ‘Abd al-Hadi al-Qadiri, 4:160.

[2] *Sultan al-Awliya*: “The Sultan of the Saints.” *Ghawth al-A’zam*: “The Supreme Helper” (or, “The Mightiest Succor”).

[3] A *fiqih* is a scholar of *fiqh* or jurisprudence (pl. fuqaha).

[4] Ibn Majah رضي الله عنه, *Sunan Ibn Majah*, Volume 1, Chapter 17: The Excellence of Scholars and Pursuation for Acquiring Knowledge, Number 222. This Hadith is reported by Ibn ‘Abbas رضي الله عنه.

[5] See: http://www.alahazrat.net/events/ursealahazrat/childhood.htm.

Education and Upbringing

A'la Hadrat رضي الله عنه was born on the 10th of Shawwal, 1272 A.H. (June 14, 1856) in the town of Barielly, India. He was the grandson of the great 'Arif and scholar, Hadrat Raza Ali Naqshbandi رضي الله عنه (1809-1866). His father, Imam Muhammad Naqi Ali al-Qadiri al-Barkaati رضي الله عنه (1831-1880), wrote more than 50 books on various subjects and laid the foundation of Darul Ifta[6] in Bareilly Shareef. Imam Ahmed Raza became proficient in 20 branches of knowledge at the feet of his father رضي الله عنه. His initial education was taught by Mirza Qadir Baig al-Baraylwī رضي الله عنه. When the youthful Imam was only twenty-two years of age, he received Bay'ah, Ijazah and Khilafah[7] in all the Sufi Silsilas from Shah Aale Rasūl Marehrawī رضي الله عنه. This divine grant occurred during their very first meeting. In the words of his Sufi Shaykh:

> "O People! You do not know Ahmed Raza. Others who come here need to be prepared before gaining Ijazah and Khilafat. But Ahmed Raza Khan has come prepared from Almighty Allah. All he needed was a link and this is why I made him my mureed[8]."

A'la Hadrat رضي الله عنه also received Islamic knowledge and Ijazahs in Hadīth from the following top-ranking scholars: Mawlana Abdul Ali Khan Rampurī رضي الله عنه (student of 'Allama Fazle Haq Khairabadī رضي الله عنه), Shaykh-e-Kabeer, Shah Abu'l Husain Ahmad al-Nūrī Marehrawī رضي الله عنه (student of Mawlana Nūr Ahmad Badayunī رضي الله عنه); Shaykh-e-Tariqa, Shah Aale Rasūl Marehrawī رضي الله عنه (student of Shah Abdul Azīz Muhaddith Dihlawī رضي الله عنه); Imām al-Shafi'iyah Shaykh Husain Salih رضي الله عنه, Mufti Hanafiya Shaykh Abdur Rahman Siraj رضي الله عنه, and Mufti Shafi'iyah Shaykh Ahmad bin Zayn Dahlan رضي الله عنه (Qadi al-Quddat, Makka[9]).

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[6] An office of Islamic jurisprudence where people visit or send questions on all aspects of Islamic law.

[7] *Bay'ah*: Initiation. *Ijazah*: Permission to transmit knowledge. *Khilafah*: Authorization.

[8] See: http://www.alahazrat.net/events/ursealahazrat/spirituallife.htm.

[9] Chief Judge of Mecca

He specialized in over fifty branches of knowledge including: Tafsīr, Hadīth, Fiqh, Usūl al-Fiqh, ‘Aqida and Kalam, Tasawwuf, Nahw, Sarf, History, Logic, Philosophy, Astronomy, Astrology and Mathematics. Due to his mental prowess, he completed his religious education at the tender age of thirteen. He is amongst the greatest Hadith scholars of his time, and the whole of the 14th Islamic Hijri did not produce a jurist to his like in Fiqh. He was also a poet par excellence. His collection of religious poetry, ***Hada’iq-e-Bakhshish***, is considered a masterpiece in Islamic literature. One of his eloquent verses, entitled *Karoron Durud* (Millions of Blessings) is recited day and night in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, England, Holland, the USA, and Africa.

Mastery of Fiqh

Imām Ahmed Raza ؓ began to issue judicial verdicts (fatawa) the very day he graduated. His first fatwa was so comprehensive that his father, a renowned Mufti of his era, was astounded. His fatawa have been gathered into 12 volumes, namely, ***al-‘Ataya al-Nabawiya fi al-Fatawa al-Ridawiyah***. Each volume is between 900 to 1,000 pages. Imam Ahmed Raza ؓ followed whatever the previous Ulama preferred and whatever they considered to be correct, just as if they would have given us the verdict in their own lifetime. Accordingly, *Fatawa Ridawiyah* is a source of reference for the Hanafi school to the present day.

Love of Sayyiduna Rasulullah ﷺ

Mawlānā Mufti Akhtar Raza Qadri Azhari Barelwi writes about the distinctive characteristic of his great-grandfather, A’la Hadrat ؓ:

> “The love of the Prophet sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam was the prime focus in his life. All his sayings and actions were steeped in love for the Prophet sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam that it can be said that, he was, from head to toe, immersed in the love of

> Rasulullah sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam. Love of the Prophet sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam was his life and that was his message[10].”

Mawlana Yaseen Akhtar Misbahi comments:

> “It is worth noting here that his love was not a kind of madness where all sense of judgment is lost; rather, his love bound him to comply with the wishes of the beloved sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam. This is the state in love, where a man’s own wishes are vanquished and he becomes a follower of the wishes of his beloved. This is the state mentioned in the hadith: ‘that a man’s desires are compliant with that [message] which I have come with.’ [*wa an yakunu hawāhu tab’an limaa jiytu bihi*]. This aspect is reflected in all his religious services and efforts[11].”

The Passing (Wisaal) of Imam Ahmed Raza

A'la Hadrat, Mujaddid Imam Ahmed Raza al-Qadiri ﷺ left this mundane world on Friday, the 25th of Safar, 1340 A.H. (October 28, 1921). It was the exact time of the Jummah Azaan. His blessed mausoleum is still a place of pious visitation for scholars and laymen alike. May Almighty Allah sanctify his secret and keep us steadfast on the *Maslak-e-Alahazrat* (the teachings of A’la Hadrat ﷺ). Amin.

[10] See: http://www.freewebs.com/barelwi/IntroToAhlusSunnah.pdf, 13.

[11] See: http://www.freewebs.com/barelwi/IntroToAhlusSunnah.pdf, 13.

INTRODUCTION

What does the ruling of apostasy (*takfir*) by a qualified mufti have to do with Muslims living in English-speaking countries like the United States, Canada, England and Australia? What happens when a Muslim denies the fundamentals of faith, and instead of repenting he professes to be a Sunni belonging to the Saved Group? Why is a controversy that took place in British India more than a century ago relevant today? Much of the following sections of this book are devoted to answering such questions, at present however, it is hoped that a brief glance should suffice. The answer to the first question is everything in the sense that correct belief is a prerequisite for the believer. As to the second question, we need to imagine what would happen if a charlatan wore the garb of a pious Sufi Shaykh and professed to be a follower of the Mujtahid Imams[12]. How would the *Ummah* (community) recognize his innovation from the true creed of Islam? In all probability, without proper guidance, we would be overcome by this ravenous wolf. In answer to the third question, it could be said that the events that took place in the recent past possess the very touchstone that establishes truth from falsehood, and a clear understanding of these events is therefore essential. And it is with this in mind, that we introduce A'la-Hadrat, Mujaddid Imam Ahmed Raza al-Qadiri al-Barkaati ﵁ (1856-1921 C.E.).

In 1902, A'la Hadrat published the fatwa of unbelief (*kufr*) in *Al-Mo'tamad Al-Mustanad* (The Reliable Proofs) against the Indian '*Ulama* (scholars) that had been heavily influenced by the deviant Wahhabi movement in Arabia. These 'Ulama primarily belonged to Darul Uloom Deoband (established in 1867) and are commonly known as Deobandis. The said fatwa was a

[12] The Mujtahid Imams: Abu Hanafi ﵁ (80-150 AH), Malik ﵁ (93-179 AH), Shafii ﵁ (150-204 AH), and Ahmad Ibn Hanbal ﵁ (164-241 AH). The four schools of law in Islam bear their names Hanafi, Malaki, Shafii, and Hanbali.

powerful defense of Islamic orthodoxy against some of the heretical and malicious statements propounded by the scholars of Deoband. It was originally Imam Ahmed Raza's marginal notes on the book *al-Mu'taqad al-Muntaqad* written by the famous Indian Hanafi and Maturidi Shaykh, Allama Fazl-i Rasul Badayuni (1795-1871). The Badayuni family had been known for its intellectual brilliance for generations. Allama Fazl-i Rasul Badayuni had debated with the chief Najdi[13] of India and their patron, Ismail Dihlawi. He was among the earliest Indian 'Ulama to refute the Wahhabiyya. His most famous student was A'la Hadrat[14]. Imam Ahmed Raza recorded some of the Deobandi Shaykhs errant statements verbatim in a summation of *Al-Mo'tamad Al-Mustanad*, which he then personally took to Mecca and Madinah during his second Hajj in 1905. He beseeched the esteemed *fuqaha* in the two holy cities to verify whether the verdict of apostasy (*takfir*) was correct or mistaken, not surprisingly, thirty-three 'Ulama of the Haramayn enthusiastically certified the fatwa against the Deobandi Shaykhs. Their verdicts, testimonials, and comments were compiled into one famous book, *Husam al-Haramayn* (The Sword of the Two Sanctuaries)[15]. The fatwa of kufr, *Al-Mo'tamad Al-Mustanad*, is also part of this compilation. In 1926, Mawlana Hashmat 'Ali Khan further adduced the names of 268 'Ulama from the Subcontinent verifying the fatwa of kufr in *al-Sawarim al-Hindiyya*. Thus, altogether *Husam al-Haramayn* has been ratified by three-hundred and one 'Ulama from the Arab world and the Subcontinent[16]. This was in all probability one of the most authoritative and comprehensive attempts by scholars to defend Islam from the subversive creed of Abd al-Wahhab, the Wahhabiyya and its sectarian offshoots.

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[13] *Najdi*: Wahhabi. The followers of Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab are called Wahhabis; they inaccurately refer to themselves as "Salafis."

[14] Barbara Daly Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 297-299.

[15] Imam Ahmad Raza, "Tamheedul Iman" in *Thesis of Imam Ahmad Raza*, (Durban: Barkaatur-Raza Publications, 2005), tr. Shaykh 'Abd al-Hadi al-Qadiri, 4:132 and 135.

[16] "Standards of Alahazrat," accessed on 9 November 2009; available from http://www.sunnirazvi.org/qadiri/glance/standards.htm.

Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792) founded the Wahhabi/“Salafi” sect in the 18th century. He poisoned the Muslims’ understanding of their religion, imposing a tyrannical brand of Islam often with the use of violence. Wahhabis are notorious for their denigration of orthodox practices and beliefs and can be recognized by their constant calls of: *takfir!* (apostate), *kufr!* (unbelief), *bid’a!* (innovation), and *shirk!* (idolatry) . Their view of the Prophet ﷺ is that he is over-venerated and overly loved by Muslims[17]. They counter our love for Allah’s Beloved Messenger ﷺ by insulting his Divinely Blessed status[18]. Sunni Muslims have been fighting this heretical sect with pens and swords for the past 200 years. During this time it has become amply clear that the Wahhabi movement is vehemently opposed to traditional Islam, which the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ brought as a mercy to mankind. Unfortunately, Wahhabi/“Salafi” missionaries have slowly but steadily infiltrated the four schools of Islamic law as well. Darul Uloom Deoband is principally responsible for compromising the Hanafi school at home (Indo-Pak) and aboard[19].

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[17] Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, *Encyclopedia of Islamic Doctrine: The Prophet* ﷺ (Mountain View: As-Sunna Foundation of American, 1998), 3:129.

[18] Hadrat Nuri Mia ؓ, *Horizons of Perfection* (Durban: Barkaatur-Raza Publications, 2005), tr. Shaykh Abu-Muhammad ‘Abd al-Hadi al-Qadiri Radawi, 49.

[19] In “Analysis Wahhabism,” Vali Nasr writes: “Is there a connection between the fundamentalism of the Taliban and the fundamentalism of the Wahhabi? [Answer:] The connection has been growing very, very strong in the past 20 years, and particularly in the past ten years. The dominant school of Islam with which the Taliban associate -- which is known as the Deobandi school -- is very prominent in Afghanistan and also in wide areas of Pakistan. Northern India has increasingly gravitated toward Wahhabi teaching, and has very, very strong organizational ties with various Wahhabi religious leaders.” See Vali Nasr, “Analysis Wahhabism,” accessed on 3 October 2009; available from http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/saudi/analyses/wahhabism.html. Likewise, Barbara D. Metcalf, Professor of History at University of California (Davis) observes: "Many commentators described the Taliban by generic, catch-all phrases like ‘fanatic,’ ‘medieval,’ and ‘fundamentalist.’ The Taliban identified themselves, however, as part of a Sunni school of thought that had its origins in the late nineteenth century colonial period of India's history, a school named after the small, country town northeast of Delhi, Deoband, where the original *madrasa* or seminary of the movement was founded in 1867. Many of the Taliban had, indeed, studied in Deobandi schools, but one spokesman for the movement in its final months went so far as to declare ‘Every Afghan is a Deobandi,’… Another movement linked to Deoband came to international attention

It is largely due to this untoward and surreptitious compromise of traditional Islam at the hands of the Deobandis that some 'Ulama today erroneously believe that A'la Hadrat's aforementioned fatwa is detrimental to the Muslim community at large and is akin to the extremism of Najd[20], which in fact, Imam Ahmed Raza ﷺ sought to eradicate. In a superficial effort to "come together" and unify the Ummah, they seek to extract the forerunners of the Deobandi school, namely, Muhammad Qasim Nanotwi (d.1879), Rashid Ahmad Gangohi (d.1905), Khalil Ahmad Saharanpuri (d.1927), and Ashraf Ali Thanwi (d.1943) from the charge of unbelief levied against them. "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir" by Nuh Keller is an outstanding example of such error and pretense. In this essay, Keller allegedly repeals *Husam al-Haramayn* as an invalid mistake, thus attempting to reinstate said Deobandi Shaykhs as pious, God-fearing Muslims.

Scholars like Keller wish to portray Islam as a monolith; consequentially, those who endorse *takfir* are relegated to the fringes. But as a matter of fact, Islam is a collection of various sects that broke away from one single group,

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at the same time, an a-political, quietest movement of internal grassroots missionary renewal, the Tablighi Jama`at. It gained some notoriety when it appeared that a young American [John Walker] who had joined the Taliban first went to Pakistan through the encouragement of a Tablighi Jama`at missionary. This movement was intriguing, in part by the very fact that is was so little known, yet, with no formal organization or paid staff, sustained networks of participants that stretched around the globe," see Barbara Metcalf, "'Traditionalist' Islamic Activism: Deoband, Tablighis, and Talibs" in Social Science Research Council (SSRC), accessed on 19 February 2010; available from http://essays.ssrc.org/sept11/essays/metcalf.htm.

[20] The Najd area includes the present day city of Riyadh, Dhahran, Dammam, Khobar, and the Gulf region. "The Sa'udis joined their tribal military forces with the puritanical Islamic ideology of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab in the eighteenth century to form a confederation that seized control of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina from the Ottoman authorities. Although defeated by Muhammad Ali of Egypt, the family retained a regional power base and reemerged in the twentieth century under the dynamic leadership of Abd al-Aziz ibn al-Sa'ud, who created the kingdom that bore his family name," see William L Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder: Westview Press, Inc., 1994), 378.

the *Ahle Sunnat*[21]. Over the past millennium, these groups rejected the beliefs and doctrines of Sunni Muslims in part or full as formalized by Imam Ashari ؓ (d. 324 A.H./936 C.E.) and the Ashari school, Imam Maturidi ؓ (d. 333 A.H./944 C.E.) and the Maturidi school, and Imam al-Tahawi ؓ (d.321 A.H./933 C.E.) in his widely acclaimed *aqida Tahawiyya*. The rule of apostasy when issued by the Ulama was not only sanctioned, but also necessary as a last resort to maintain at least one clear link to the Way of the Prophet ﷺ and the Congregation of Muslims. Thus, such a ruling, which acted as a protection for traditional Sunni Islam, can never be compared to the reckless calls of *kufr* that we hear today from the Wahhabi community.

One of the first sects to cause a rift in the Islamic fabric was the Khawarij or Kharijites. They existed at the time of the Successors of the Companions ؓ, and declared the Sahaba ؓ and whosoever was with them to be apostate, disbelievers. Ibn 'Umar ؓ saw them as the worst of Allah's creation[22]. Like the other factions, they subdivided into several groups. What distinguishes the *Ahle Sunnat wal Jama'at* from the rest is its internal intellectual cohesion. Allah's Messenger ﷺ foretold of these schisms and warned the Ummah to hold fast to the Saved Group. He said there would be 73 sects, each and every one of them in the Fire of Hell, apart from one solitary exception (Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud, al-Darimi)[23]. The Deobandi Shaykhs, slowly but surely, became an offshoot of the Wahhabi/"Salafi" sect when they declared their heresy and maliciously degraded the stature and rank of Allah's Beloved Prophet ﷺ.

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[21] Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani ؓ, *Sufficient Provisions for Seekers of the Path of Truth* (Hollywood: Al-Baz Publishing, 1995), 1:393-401.

[22] Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, *The Approach of Armageddon? An Islamic Perspective* (Washington: Islamic Supreme Council of America, 2003), 160.

[23] Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani ؓ identifies "ten basic sectarian divisions which gave rise to the seventy-three sects mentioned in the tradition [*hadith*] of the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace)" (*Sufficient Provisions for Seekers of the Path of Truth*, 1:389). To which he said: "As for the one group that is saved from damnation [*al-firqat an-nijiya*], it is the People of the Sunna and the Community [*Ahl as-Sunna wa'l-Jama'a*]" (Ibid., 1:400).

Nevertheless, “Iman, Kufr, and Takfir” encourages Muslims to reject the truth and a truthful person that too one who clearly bears the stamp of authority. Nuh Keller has examined A’la Hadrat رضي الله عنه and found him wanting! Throughout this rebuttal, which forms the *raison detre* for this book, we ask the reader to consider the hadith, “The believer is the mirror of the believer” and the explanation of it by al-Munawi رضي الله عنه. Then judge if Imam Ahmed Raza رضي الله عنه issued his verdict in light of the Qur’an and Sunnah or whether “its premises are based on inaccurate observation and inattention to needful logical distinctions,” as Keller alleges in his apologetic[24]. Al-Munawi رضي الله عنه commented:

> “In a mirror, a man sees nothing but his own face and person. And if he exerts himself to the uttermost in order to see the body of the mirror, he does not see it because his own image veils him. Al-Tibi said, **‘Concerning the unveiling of his brother’s defects, the (examined) believer is like a polished mirror which displays all images reflected in it, no matter how minute…’** Therefore whoever has gathered the features of Iman, accomplished the manners of Islam, and excelled internally against the blameworthy features of his ego (*nafs*), then his heart raises to the peak of *ihsan* (excellence), so pure that it becomes like a mirror; **if the believers look at him, they see the darkness of their own condition reflected within the purity of his, and they see the ill state of their own manners reflected within the excellence of his**[25].”

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[24] Nuh Keller, “Iman, Kufr, and Takfir,” accessed 7 December 2009; available from http://shadhilitariqa.com/site/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=37&Itemid=20. This essay is also avialiable from http://shadhiliteachings.com/ under articles, “Iman, Kufr, and Takfir.”

[25] Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, *Encyclopedia of Islamic Doctrine: Beliefs*, 1:21-22. Bold is the compiler’s emphasis.

The Voice of Truth: A'la Hadrat, Mujaddid Imam Ahmed Raza ﵁ seeks to address the most salient points of Nuh Keller's argument. Chapter Two provides a historical sketch of British India. The chapter following it presents an outline and summation of Nuh Keller's apologetic excerpted verbatim from his own essay as it was posted on the internet as of December 7, 2009. In Chapter Four we will objectively consider what was said and by whom. The next chapter addresses Nuh Keller's justification of their stance(s), which is essentially an argument to the man, i.e. Imam Ahmed Raza ﵁. Thus, in Chapters Five to Eight we answer the following questions:

1. Was the august Mujaddid aware of the great Jurists of Islam and their rulings, namely, Imam Haskafi ﵁ and the Shafii Imam Subki ﵁?
2. Did A'la Hadrat give due consideration to the intention behind the offence and the emotions aroused by the "fatwa wars" in light of the Sunnah?
3. Why did 301 scholars from the Arab world and the Subcontinent endorse *Husam al-Haramayn* when so many Islamic interpretations are possible?

In Chapter Seven, we pause to examine the *Sahih Ahadith* that Nuh Keller cites as proof to support his argument. Chapter Nine addresses the Deobandis denial of disbelief, while Chapter Ten and Eleven highlight some of the insidious points and fallacies that Keller makes in "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir." Before closing we give a summation of the argument. We have also included an appendix on the Kharijites and Takfir along with seven exhibits to substantiate our claim. The compiler's intention is to present the position of the *Ahle-Sunnat wal Jama'at* and clarify many of the misconceptions and false accusations levied against Imam Ahmed Raza ﵁.

A BRIEF HISTORY

The Rise of Modernism

The 18th and 19th centuries were a turbulent time for much of the Islamic world. A powerful Western Europe with strong imperialist ambitions was increasingly getting control over Muslim territories. Traditional cultures seemed to have no answer to the persuasive economic and military arguments put forth by Western Europe; this meant that most Islamic societies were on the back-foot.

As nation after nation capitulated before the military and industrial might of Europe, native populations across the world were forced to make great adjustments to cope with changes in their economic, social and religious life. The Indian subcontinent was no different. The British Empire had by the mid 19th century fully consolidated its authority over the vast tracts of India, from the pinnacle of the Himalayas to the southernmost tip that juts intrusively onto the Indian Ocean.

Concurrent with the global changes, a strong influence in the Muslim world had raised itself from virtual obscurity in the deserts of Arabia. This small but influential force was that of the Wahhabi/“Salafi” sect started by Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1787 C.E.). His doctrine first appeared in Najd, and the governor of this district, Muhammad Ibn Saud, aided Ibn Abd al-Wahhab’s effort and forced people to follow him. The Wahhabis engaged in armed rebellion against the Ottoman Caliphate attacking the Two Noble Sanctuaries. They willfully executed any Muslim who did not share their subversive creed. Ibn Abd al-Wahhab went so far as to kill a blind *muezzin* because he refused to stop praying for the Prophet ﷺ

at the conclusion of his call to prayer[26]. The Wahhabis were notorious for questioning tradition and causing confusion and *fitna* (strife) to enter the Arab lands.

The followers of Abd al-Wahhab, the Khawarij of our times[27], were identified in 1754. Sunni scholars of the Hijaz gave warning to the Muslims far and wide about this astray sect. Mawlana Sharif Ghalib ﵀, the prince of Mecca, fought the Wahhabis from 1791 to 1803[28]. By 1806 the Wahhabis occupied Mecca and Madinah, plundering the room of the Prophet ﷺ and doing countless disgraceful acts like burning many books containing prayers for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. At the same time, the Wahhabis destroyed books on Islamic law, commentaries on the Quran, and volumes of Hadith because they contradicted Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's pernicious creed[29]. Their barbarous reign lasted for seven years (circa 1813) until the Ottoman Sultan ﵀ issued a decree to Muhammad Ali of Egypt beseeching him to fight and vanquish the enemy! He routed the Wahhabiyya and executed their leaders. The military campaigns of Muhammad Ali ﵀ and his son, Ibrahim Basha ﵀, went on for seven years. Sunni Muslims from Egypt to Arabia celebrated and rejoiced as news of their victory spread! In 1820, the Ottoman Caliphate regained control of the region[30]. The famous *Ahle Sunnat* scholar

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[26] Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, *Encyclopedia of Islamic Doctrine: Beliefs* (Mountain View: As-Sunna Foundation of America, 1998), 1:188-197.

[27] "*Khawariji*: 'Outsiders,' a sect who considered all Muslims who did not follow them, disbelievers. The Prophet ﷺ said about them as related by Bukhari: 'They will transfer the Quranic verses meant to refer to disbelievers and make them refer to believers.' Ibn Abidin ﵀ applied the name of Khawarij to the Wahhabi movement" (Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, *Encyclopedia of Islamic Doctrine: Self-Purification*, 5:169).

[28] "History of Muslims Fighting with the Wahhabiyyah as they Emerged," accessed on 27 October 2009; available from http://www.nooremadinah.net/Documents/Misc/MuslimsFightingWithTheWahhabiyyah/MuslimsFightingWithTheWahhabiyyah.pdf.

[29] Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, *Encyclopedia of Islamic Doctrine: Beliefs* (Mountain View: As-Sunna Foundation of America, 1998), 1:190.

[30] "History of Muslims Fighting with the Wahhabiyyah as they Emerged," accessed on 27 October 2009; available from http://www.nooremadinah.net/Documents/Misc/MuslimsFightingWithTheWahhabiyyah/

Allama Ibn Abidin ﷺ (1784-1836) of Damascus, Syria, was able to condemn the Wahhabis in *Radd al-Muhtar* due to the warning given by the Sunni Ulama of the Hijaz! It was not a little known event in Islamic history, nor was it an isolated episode.

The Prophet ﷺ had in fact, foretold of the dissensions and problems that would come from the area of Najd. Ibn 'Umar ﷺ related, "I saw the Messenger of Allah ﷺ pointing to the East and he then said, 'Look! The dissension is from here, the dissension is from here. From there will arise the horn of Shaytan'" (*Sahih Bukhari*, "Kitab al-fitan," 8:95 and *Sahih Muslim*, "Kitab al-fitan," 2095). In another authentic hadith, Sayyiduna Rasulullah ﷺ did not pray for the people of Najd despite being appealed to three times[31]. He ﷺ said that their mark would be *tahliq* or shaved heads[32]. Unfortunately, the Wahhabi influence was not restricted to the Arabian Peninsula. Muslims from the Subcontinent had also come under the influence of their missionaries.

The Wahhabi Reformation of India

Two prominent examples of Wahabbism in India are Muhammad Ismail Dihlawi (1778-1831)[33] and Sayyid Ahmad Barelwi (1786-1831). Dihlawi gave an oath of allegiance (Bay'ah) to the latter as his Sufi Shaykh. Sayyid Ahmad went on to garner a reputation as being India's first and most ferocious reformer. Like his Wahhabi counterparts in Arabia, he was known for rejecting traditional Islamic practices. According to Barbara Daly Metcalf, Professor of History at the University of California, Davis:

MuslimsFightingWithTheWahhabiyyah.pdf.

[31] Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, *The Approach of Armageddon? An Islamic Perspective* (Fenton: Islamic Supreme Council of America, 2003), 195.

[32] Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, *Encyclopedia of Islamic Doctrine: The Prophet* ﷺ (Mountain View, As-Sunna Foundation of America, 1998), 3:121. Alawi ibn Ahmad al-Haddad ﷺ and others pointed out that this was one of the marks of the Wahhabis. *Tahliq* here also means: "sitting in circles."

[33] Ismail Dihlawi was the son of Shah Abdul Ghani ﷺ (d. 1782).

> "What initially distinguished Sayyid Ahmad from these elders [of the Waliyu'llah family, namely, 'Abdu'l-'Aziz and 'Abdu'l-Qadir], and what was to be in fact his lasting influence, was his commitment to popular reform of custom and practice. Others of the 'ulama had interpreted revitalization of Islam in more intellectual than practical form. With him and his followers, renewal was set on a wholly different and more radical course[34]."

Again,

> "His [approach] was to be nothing less than one of the genuinely utopian movements of modern India, in this case seeking not to withdraw as an exclusive sect but **to destroy society itself** and build it anew on a just and egalitarian basis[35]."

Can a movement that seeks **"to destroy society itself"** build it anew on a just and egalitarian basis? The approach of Sayyid Ahmad Barewli and his followers was purely Wahhabi and extremely radical. Even Britishers in the Subcontinent began using the term "Wahhabi" in reference to the jihadists that were following the leadership of this dynamic, new reformer[36]! Prominent Sunni scholars actively refuted and resisted this genuinely degenerative and vacuous creed[37]. Sayyid Ahmad Barelwi and his followers undertook a tour lasting six months through upper Doab (India) in 1818-1819. Some of the cities he visited include Deoband, Gangoh, Nanautah,

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[34] Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India*, 54-55.
[35] Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India*, 52. Bold is the compiler's emphasis.
[36] Usha Sanyal, *Ahmad Riza Khan Barelwi*, 39.
[37] For instance, Shah 'Abdu'l-'Aziz ibn Shah Waliyu'llah ﵀ **refused to abandon** "suspect practices" like engaging in medical cures, determining auspicious times, and distributing food after reading the Fatihah at his father's grave (*Islamic Revival in British India*, 54-55).

Thanah Bhawan, and Saharanpur[38]. During this time he preached a reformist message winning allies to his cause in the cities where the forerunners of the Deobandi school were born and raised[39]!

Sayyid Ahmad's most faithful and prolific lieutenant was Ismail Dihlawi, who was ironically related to some of the most stalwart personalities in the Muslim world, such as Shah Wali Allah Muhaddith Dihlawi رحمه الله, Shah Abdul Aziz رحمه الله, Shah Rafiuddin رحمه الله and Shah Abdul Qadir رحمه الله. The former was his paternal grandfather, while the latter were his paternal uncles. Shah Abdul Aziz رحمه الله was considered a Reviver (*Mujaddid*) of the 13th Islamic Hijri. His students were made up of two groups: one that remained steadfast upon the Waliyullah family creed and did not tolerate anything against the issues of Shari'ah, and the other group that pressed for the abandonment of *taqleed*[40] and called for *ijtihad*[41]. Ismail Dihlawi belonged to the latter group that rejected the creed of his paternal uncles[42].

He authored *Taqwiyat al-Iman* to capsulize the views of the dissenting group. This book accuses the Ummah of falling into three categories of *shirk* (polytheism): those who associate others with God's knowledge, those who associate others with God's power, and those who associate others with God's worship[43]. According to Dihlawi and his followers, knowledge of the unseen belongs exclusively to Allah Ta'ala, thus to believe that the prophets

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[38] Coincidently and perhaps not too surprisingly the most prominent early Deobandi scholars, such as Rashid Ahmad al-Gangohi, Muhammad Qasim al-Nanautwi, Ashraf Ali Thanwi (of Thanah Bhawan), and Khalil Ahmad al-Saharanpuri all came from the cities mentioned above.

[39] Barbara Daly Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 59-60.

[40] *Taqleed*: Adherence to one of the four schools of law in Sunni Islam: Hanafi, Maliki, Shafii, or Hanbali.

[41] *Ijtihad*: Individual inquiry to establish the ruling of the Shari'at.

[42] Mawlana Yaseen Akhtar Misbahi, *AHLU'S SUNNAH WA'L JAMA'AH AN INTRODUCTION*, tr. Muhammad Aqdas, accessed on 13 September 2009; available from http://www.freewebs.com/barelwi/IntroToAhlusSunnah.pdf, 3.

[43] Usha Sanyal, *Ahmad Riza Khan Barelwi: In the Path of the Prophet* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2005), 32.

were bestowed *'ilm al-ghaib* falls into the first category of shirk. Intercession belongs to the second category. Whilst traditional Sunni practices, such as *Mawlid*[44], *ziyarat*[45], and all forms of "Sufi excess" are examples of the third category of shirk. Ismail Dihlawi himself admitted:

> "I have written this book[46] and I know that there are harsh words in some places and extremist views in certain other places. For example, some actions which are hidden polytheism [Shirk-e-Khafi], I have labeled it as manifest polytheism [Shirk-e-Jali][47]."

Nota Bene: Muslims *do not* have the right to rearrange the categories of the Sacred Law to suit their own whims. Here are a few quotes[48] from *Taqwiya al-Iman* to make Muslims aware of what Dihlawi meant by harsh words and extremists views:

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44 Commemorating the birthday of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

45 Visiting the graves of the Holy Prophet ﷺ in Madinah, and the Sufi Saints. "While it cannot be said that the opponents of tomb pilgrimage have at all succeeded in suppressing the practice, its condemnation has a very prominent place in the most widely used textbooks of the Deoband school, such as Ashraf 'Ali Thanvi's *Heavenly Ornaments*… The stridency of the defense of tomb pilgrimage by recent Sufi authorities in South Asia is probably the best evidence of the success of reformist polemic. It may be fairly stated that the chief divide in modern South Asian Islam is that between the reformist Deoband school and the devotional and pietist Barelvi school, which champions practices that honor the Prophet and the Sufi saints," see Carl W. Ernst and Bruce B. Lawrence, *Sufi Martyrs of Love: The Chishti Order in South Asia and Beyond* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 95-96.

46 *Taqwiyatul Iman*

47 Mawlana Yaseen Akhtar Misbahi, *AHLU'S SUNNAH WA'L JAMA'AH AN INTRODUCTION*, tr. Muhammad Aqdas, accessed on 13 September 2009; available from http://www.freewebs.com/barelwi/IntroToAhlusSunnah.pdf, 4.

48 All quotes were excerpted from Shaykh Gibril F Haddad, "Book Review of *Taqwiyat al-Iman: Strengthening of the Faith*," available from http://mac.abc.se/home/onesr/d/tqi_e.pdf.

- "He [Allah] may bring into existence millions of Prophets, saints, jinns, angels, and entities equal to Gabriel and the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ in terms of status."

- "We must understand that anyone whether one of the most eminent human beings or any of the angels dearest and nearest to Allah does not carry the status of even a shoe-maker in terms of frivolity and disgrace, while facing the magnificence of the Divinity."

- "Presently, all kinds of *shirk* (both the ancient and new ones) are rampant among Muslims. What the Prophet ﷺ prophesied earlier seems to be coming true now. For instance, the Muslims are treating Prophets, saints, *Imam* and martyrs, etc. polytheistically[49]."

Commenting on the hadith narrated from Qays ibn Sa'id ﷺ concerning prostration before the Prophet's ﷺ grave, Dihlawi wrote:

- "The day would come when he ﷺ would die and turn to dust[50] and then he ﷺ would not be worthy of such prostrations."

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[49] Shaykh Gibril F. Haddad refutes this dubious assertion in his book review of *Taqwiyat al-Īmān*. He notes that: "The attribution of *shirk* to the majority of the *Umma* is an unmistakable signature of the heresy of the *Khawārij*, who did not hesitate to brand as *mushrik* the rank and file of the Muslims including the Rightly-Guided Caliphs. As for the prophesies related to polytheism at the end of time, they pertain to the very last phase of the Major Signs *(al-'alāmāt alkubrā)* before the rising of the Hour. Such does not occur until after the killing of the *Dajjāl* at the hands of 'Īsā ﷺ, followed by his death and the disappearance of all believers from the face of the earth. The author of *Taqwiyat al-Īmān* knows this full well since he cites a hadīth from *Sahīh Muslim* to that effect at the end of his Chapter Six [p. 110-111]! Until then, the Prophet ﷺ said that his *Umma* was protected against error and that his greatest fear for us was not *shirk* but worldly competition and scholarly impostors. Thus the charge that 'the Muslims are treating Prophets, saints, *Imam* and martyrs, etc. polytheistically' is supported by inapplicable evidence and is overwhelmingly false. In fact, this charge is only a camouflage of the very real disrespect of Prophets and Saints for which Wahhābism and its sectarian offshoots stand" (see: http://mac.abc.se/home/onesr/d/tqi_e.pdf, 3).

[50] Yet the Prophet ﷺ said: "Allah ﷻ forbade the earth to consume the bodies of Prophets!" This hadith is narrated from Aws ibn Aws al-Thaqafi ﷺ by Abu Dawud ﷺ,

Taqwiyat al-Īmān shows gross ignorance of the Ash'ari and Maturidi Schools in Aqida. Due to numerous doctrinal errors, the infamous book is a treatise on heresy instead of Tawhid (Islamic monotheism). Ismail Dihlawi introduced the heretical beliefs of the Wahhabi/"Salafi" sect to the Subcontinent, and "Just as Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb raised a storm of controversy and was refuted by a host of Sunnī Ulema from the Hijāz and elsewhere beginning with his own brother Sulaymān ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb, Ismā'īl Dihlawī was also immediately opposed by a host of Indian Sunnī Ulema beginning with his own family and the Ulema of Delhi such as his two paternal uncles Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz Muhaddith Dihlawī (d.1239/1834) (the son of Shāh Walī Allāh and one of those considered a Renewer of the thirteenth Hijrī century) and Shāh Raf'ī al-Dīn Muhaddith Dihlawī in his *Fatāwā*, Shāh Ahmad Sa'īd Dihlawī, Mawlānā Sadr al-Dīn the Grand Mufti of Delhi, Mawlānā Fadl al-Rasūl al-Badaywānī in *al-Mu'taqad al-Muntaqad* and *Sayf al-Jabbār*, Mawlānā Fadl al-Haqq Kayrābādī, Mawlānā 'Ināyat Ahmad Kākurūwī (author of *'Ilm al-Sīgha*), Shāh Ra'ūf Ahmad Naqshbandī Mujaddidī, and others[51]."

Those who admirer Ismail Dihlawi readily admit that he was reviving the works of Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb. Take for example this publisher's note to *Taqwiyat al-Iman* written by Abdul-Malik Mujahid:

> "The services which he [Ismail Dihlawi] has rendered for the reformation of Ummah and his undertaking the task of Da'wah (the mission of propagating Islam); especially after the previous works of Shaikhul-Islam Imam Ibn Taimiyah and **Muhammad**

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al-Nasa'i ﷺ, Ibn Majah ﷺ, Ahmad ﷺ and others, all with a sound chain meeting Muslim's ﷺ criterion (Ibid.).

[51] Shaykh Gibril F Haddad, "Book Review of *Taqwiyat al-Iman: Strengthening of the Faith*," available from http://mac.abc.se/home/onesr/d/tqi_e.pdf, 2-3.

> **bin Abdul Wahhab**, are absolutely unforgettable and shall always be cherished in our minds[52]**.**"

In light of this well established fact, Ismail Dihlawi was correctly identified as "the chief Najdī" (*kabīr al-najdiyya*) of India and "their patron" (*mawlāhum*)[53]! It should also be remembered that Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328) was incarcerated for his arrogance and deviation[54]. Ibn Taymiyya like 'Abd al-Wahhab was guilty of introducing innovations in the religion. For this reason, Hadrat Shah Makhsoos Ullah son of Shāh Rafī al-Dīn son of Shāh Walī Allāh Muhaddith Dihlawi ﷺ said that *Taqwiyat al-Īmān* is like a commentary (*sharh*) on Abd al-Wahhab's *Kitab al-Tawhid*[55]. He wrote a monograph refuting Ismail's book named *Mu'eedul Iman*. In 1851, Allama Fazle Rasool Uthmani Badayuni ﷺ asked Shah Makhsoos Ullah ﷺ seven questions regarding *Taqwiyat al-Īmān*. In answer to one of the questions he said*:*

> "Ismail's book is not only against the traditions of our family but it is against the Tawhid of all the Prophets and Messengers themselves! Because Prophets and Messengers are sent to teach the people and make them walk the path of Tawĥīd. In this book however, there is no sign of that Tawĥīd nor the Sunnah of the Messengers. Things that are claimed as Shirk and Bid'ah in this book and taught to the people have not been labeled as such by any of the Prophets or their followers. If

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[52] Ismail Dihlawi, *Taqwiyat-ul-Iman*, accessed on 30 October 2009; available from www.islambasics.com/index.php?act=download&BID=162, 5. Bold is the compiler's emphasis.

[53] Shaykh Gibril F Haddad, "Book Review of *Taqwiyat al-Iman: Strengthening of the Faith*," available from http://mac.abc.se/home/onesr/d/tqi_e.pdf, 1.

[54] Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, *Encyclopedia of Islamic Doctrine: Beliefs* (Mountain View: As-Sunna Foundation of America, 1998), 1:12.

[55] Mawlana Yaseen Akhtar Misbahi, *AHLU'S SUNNAH WA'L JAMA'AH AN INTRODUCTION*, tr. Muhammad Aqdas, accessed on 13 September 2009; available from http://www.freewebs.com/barelwi/IntroToAhlusSunnah.pdf, 6.

there is any proof otherwise, ask his followers to show it to us.[56]"

Sayyid Ahmad Barelwi and Ismail Dihlawi strayed from the beliefs of their predecessors and the creed of Waliyullahi family. Sunni scholars were ultimately forced to publically refute them. In 1824, the famous dialogue happened at the Jamia Mosque of Delhi. Two faithful lieutenants of Sayyid Ahmad Barewli were on one side[57], while on the other side sat Mawlana Munawwaruddin رحمه الله and all the scholars of Delhi[58]. It was one of the most famous debates of the early nineteenth century, and dealt with Allah's عزّ وجلّ omnipotence, namely, *imkan al-nazir* or "the possibility of an equal" (of the Prophet ﷺ) and *imkan al-kadhib* or "the possibility of lying" (on the part of Allah Most High!). The Sunni Ulama of India **actively refuted and condemned** Ismail Dihlawi for his innovative beliefs and doctrines; they continued to **oppose** his writings during the lifetime of Muhammad Qasim Nanotwi and Rashid Ahmad Gangohi! Nevertheless, the founders of Darul Uloom Deoband choose to imitate Ismail Dihlawi in *Tahzir-un-Naas* and *Fatawa Rasheediyah* instead of siding with the Ulama of the *Ahle-Sunnat wal Jama'at*.

Prior to the propagation of Wahhabi ideology by these reform movements, the Muslims of India belonged to two groups: Sunni or Shia. Religious sectarianism began in the Subcontinent after 1825 *due to* the wide-spread circulation of such heretical works in the common vernacular (Urdu)[59]. For this reason, refuting the Wahhabis of India became a dominant feature of

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[56] Mawlana Yaseen Akhtar Misbahi, *AHLU'S SUNNAH WA'L JAMA'AH AN INTRODUCTION*, tr. Muhammad Aqdas, accessed on 13 September 2009; available from http://www.freewebs.com/barelwi/IntroToAhlusSunnah.pdf, 5-6.

[57] Ismail Dihlawi and Abdul Hayy

[58] Mawlana Yaseen Akhtar Misbahi, *AHLU'S SUNNAH WA'L JAMA'AH AN INTRODUCTION*, tr. Muhammad Aqdas, accessed on 13 September 2009; available from http://www.freewebs.com/barelwi/IntroToAhlusSunnah.pdf, 5.

[59] Mawlana Yaseen Akhtar Misbahi, *AHLU'S SUNNAH WA'L JAMA'AH AN INTRODUCTION*, tr. Muhammad Aqdas, accessed on 13 September 2009; available from http://www.freewebs.com/barelwi/IntroToAhlusSunnah.pdf, 8-12.

Sunni heresiography[60], so much so that Mawlānā Ahmad Raza Hanafi Qadri Barkati Barelwi ؓ (1856-1921) began writing rebuttals to Wahhabis in his youth. This is but one of the many fields that he learned from his illustrious Masha'ikh, such as Imam Muhammad Naqi Ali al-Qaadiri al-Barkaati Muhaqqiq Barelwi ؓ (d.1880), Maulana Fazl-i Rasul Bada'uni ؓ (d. 1871), and Allama Fazl-i Haqq Khairabadi ؓ (d.1861). Opposition to the heretical ideology of the Wahhabi/"Salafi" sect has remained a recurring theme in Sunni literature to the present day!

Wahhabi University

The writings of Ismail Dihlawi and the pseudo-Sufism of Sayyid Ahmad Barewli heavily influenced the senior Ulama of Darul Uloom Deoband. Hence, slowly but surely, they became a sectarian offshoot of the Wahhabi Reformation. The Deobandi Shaykhs sought to "purify" the religion from what they perceived as polytheistic innovations and false beliefs. "Innovations" and beliefs that some of the most popular Sufi Shaykhs of the colonial period were actively committed to, including Shah Abdul Aziz ؓ and Hajji Imdadullah ؓ. Under the influence of Wahhabism, the Deobandis denied the most fundamental beliefs like the Prophet's ﷺ status as the Seal of Messengers and his knowledge of the unseen (*ilm al-ghaib*). They took great liberty in degrading the Habib ﷺ and prohibited people from celebrating *Mawlid*. They also called into question the Sunnah of saying "Ya Rasulullah ﷺ!" So even though their *silsilah*[61] was Chishtiyyah their *suluk*[62] was Ahmadiyyah (of Sayyid Ahmad Barewli).

In 1867, Muhammad Qasim Nanotwi (d.1879) and Rashid Ahmad Gangohi (d.1905) established the first Darul Uloom in Deoband, India. It was a new kind of *madrassa*, which abandoned traditional teaching methodology in favor of the modern British educational institutions. The school employed

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[60] Heresiography is a treatise on heresy.

[61] *Silsilah*: the "chain" of spiritual descent from a common founder.

[62] *Suluk*: journey, way; the particular path of conduct taught by a Sufi.

about a dozen teachers and enrolled 200 to 300 students a year[63]. The Deobandi Shaykhs professed to be strict Hanafis and mainstream Sufis making them seem pretty traditional to the rank and file of their followers. However, Nanotwi and Gangohi made a clear departure from the *Ahle Sunnat wal Jama'at* when they embraced some of Ismail Dihlawi's heretical Wahhabi beliefs.

Rashid Ahmad Gangohi's misplaced loyalty to Ismail Dihlawi and his good opinion of the Wahhabi/"Salafi" sect is a testament to this fact. Despite the tremendous opposition and controversy caused by *Taqwiyat al-Īmān*, Gangohi estimated that two or two-hundred and fifty thousand people were **"set aright"** during Ismail Dihlawi's lifetime, and that numbers beyond any counting had been influenced since[64]! If heresy is right then it should be obvious that traditional Sunni Islam is wrong. Assuredly, Gangohi saw the Wahhabi influence in a favorable light. The Deobandi Shaykh was a follower of Ismail Dihlawi, who was responsible for introducing the heretical writings of Ibn Taymiyya and Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb to the Subcontinent.

Not surprisingly, Rashid Ahmad Gangohi issued his *Fatawa* according to this aberrant view by portraying Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb as a follower of the Hanbali school of Islamic law, who acted upon the Hadith and used to prevent people from Shirk and innovation (bid'a). He further alleged that al-Najdi's followers had good beliefs and the basic beliefs of everyone (Wahhabi and Sunni) are united. Thus, the difference they have in actions is like the difference between the schools of Islamic law (*Fatawa*

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[63] Usha Sanyal, *Ahmad Riza Khan Barelwi: In the Path of the Prophet* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005), 35 and 124.
[64] Barbara Daly Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 200.

Rashidiyya, P. 241-242)[65]. Darul Uloom Deoband issued *Fatawa* accepting the beliefs and methodology of Ibn Wahhab even though he held that shedding the blood of Muslims, seizing their property and defiling their honor was lawful. Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb wrongly branded the *Ahle Qibla* idolaters, whereas idolatry ended in Arabia with the conquest of Mecca by the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and the reign of the rightly guided Caliphs ﷺ.

Rashid Ahmad Gangohi also places Sayyid Ahmad Barelwi's name next to some of the greatest Sufi Shaykhs of all time. In *Fatawa Rashidiyyah* he confessed:

> "Those who tried to effect reform were Shaikh 'Abdu'l-Qadir Gilani, Shaikh Shihabu'd-Din Suhrawardi, Shaikh Ahmad Sarhindi, and **Sayyid Ahmad Barelwi**. God revealed to them the way of the *sunnat* and, praise be to Him, He also revealed it to me[66]."

The aforementioned Sufi Shaykhs ﷺ (save Sayyid Ahmad Barelwi) sought to revitalize traditional Islam through their gnosis, *taqwa*, and writings. They *were* scholars and Saints, not self-appointed jihadists. It is also interesting to note that Rashid Ahmad Gangohi *did not* take the name of his own Sufi Shaykh, Hajji Imdadullah ﷺ, who had no fewer than eight chains of spiritual lineage to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. None of which are affiliated to Sayyid Ahmad Barelwi. Deobandi sources attempt to establish a "link" between the famous Sabri-Chishti Shaykh and Sayyid Ahmad Barewli[67], "yet Imdadullah himself never mentions this spiritual lineage[68]."

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[65] Muhammad ibn Adam of Darul Iftaa in Leicester, UK, "Shaykh Rashid Ahmad Gangohi's Stance on the Najdis" (2005), accessed on 30 August 2009; available from http://www.daruliftaa.com/question.asp?txt_QuestionID=q-18272411.

[66] Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India*, 183.

[67] Secondary sources attempt to identify Imdadullah ﷺ with Sayyid Ahmad Barelwi, but these accounts are tenuous at best. In example, Hafiz Qari Fuyud al-Rahman quotes

Hajji Imdadullah ﷺ also adhered to the customary Islamic practices and beliefs that Sayyid Ahmad and his followers condemned like Mawlid, Qiyam (standing during Salat & Salam), 'Urs, calling on someone other than Allah ﷻ (e.g. "Ya Rasulullah ﷺ!"), and belief in the Prophet's ﷺ knowledge of the unseen. Although it was not his custom, he even defended the prevalent Fatihah[69]. Let it be known that the founder of Darul Uloom Deoband choose to exalt a reformer over his own *Shaykhu'l-Mushaykh* [70] ﷺ, Shah 'Abd ul-'Aziz ﷺ, and Shah Waliyu'llah ﷺ. Through his *Fatawa*, Rashid Ahmad Gangohi enthusiastically endorsed the Wahhabi Reformation of India!

The Deobandi Defense of Gangohi's Stance

Muhammad ibn Adam of Darul Iftaa in Leicester, UK, contends that one must understand the background of the Shaykh's statements. First, the Deobandi alim relates what the late Grand Mufti of India, Mahmud al-Hasan (d. 1994), alleges in his fatawa that:

Maulana Zakariyya in *Hazrat Hajji Imdad Allah Muhajir Makki aur un ke khulafa'* in order to establish a childhood "link." Zakariyya asserts that at the age of three, Imdadullah ﷺ was embraced by Sayyid Ahmad Barelwi and given an "honorary initiation." See Carl W. Ernst amd Bruce B. Lawrence, *Sufi Martyrs of Love* (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2002), 119 and 204 (footnote, 37). **Deobandis give credence to such apocryphal links because it serves to legitimize their illegitimate scholars, namely, Ismail Dihlawi and Sayyid Ahmad Barewli.** One way they attempt to do this is by establishing some sort of "link" to authentic scholars. For this reason, Ismail Dihlawi's filial ties to the Waliyu'llah family are always mentioned *before* his allegiance to Ibn Taymiyya and Abd al-Wahhab. In reality, there is *no connection* between the creed of the Waliyu'llah family and that of Ibn Taymiyya or Abd al-Wahhab! Likewise, Hajji Imdadullah's ﷺ alleged "honorary initiation" gives *undue* legitimacy to Sayyid Ahmad Barewli and his Wahhabi Reformation of India.

[68] Carl W. Ernst amd Bruce B. Lawrence, *Sufi Martyrs of Love* (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2002), 119.

[69] Hajji Imdad Ullah Hanafi Muhajir Makki Chishti Saabri ﷺ, *Faisla Haft Masla*, accessed on 31 October 2009; available from http://www.maktabah.org/attachments/120_FHMasla.pdf.

[70] The scholars of Deoband referred to their Murshid, Hajji Imdadullah ﷺ, as the *Shaykhu'l-Mushaykh* or guide of the guides.

> "Shaykh Rashid Ahmad (Allah have mercy on him) was **initially unaware** of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab al-Najdi's position, because al-Najdi was initially known in the Subcontinent as a reformer of Sunnah, and the one who strived greatly in rejecting Bid'a and establishing the Sunnah. As such, the respected Shaykh also said what he had heard, for a Muslim should always hold good opinions about other Muslims until it is proven otherwise[71]"

One might rightly ask: Who did Gangohi hear this from? The Sunni 'Ulama of the Subcontinent and Arabia used the term Wahhabi in a derogatory sense, as did the British Raj. Even the Wahhabiyya vehemently reject this label and prefer to be called "Salafi[72]!" Perhaps this is why Muhammad ibn Adam continues to build his case by alleging that Rashid Ahmad Gangohi was unaware of what Allama Ibn Abidin ﵀ had stated about the Wahhabis in *Radd al-Muhtar* (the primary reference work for fatwa in the Hanafi school). Ibn Adam mistakenly reassures the Ummah that if Rashid Ahmad had been aware of this ruling then "he would surely not have stated what he had in his Fatawa." Gangohi's apologist even acknowledges that his elder later received the very book "wherein Allama Ibn Abidin (Allah have mercy on him) clearly refuted Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab," but he insists that the Deobandi Shaykh never read the chapter regarding the followers of Abd al-Wahhab, the Khawarij of our times[73]!

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[71] Muhammad ibn Adam of Darul Iftaa in Leicester, UK, "Shaykh Rashid Ahmad Gangohi's Stance on the Najdis" (2005), accessed on 30 August 2009; available from http://www.daruliftaa.com/question.asp?txt_QuestionID=q-18272411. Bold is the compiler's emphasis. Rashid Ahmad Gangohi is the great-grand teacher of Mufti Mahud al-Hasan. Ibn Adam received Ijazah in Hadith from the latter. Their school of thought is Deobandi.

[72] Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, *Encyclopedia of Islamic Doctrine: Beliefs* (Mountain View: As-Sunna Foundation of America Publications, 1998), 1:53.

[73] "Allama Ibn Abidin states: '…As it has occurred in our times with the followers of Abd al-Wahhab al-Najdi, who appeared from Najd and imposed their control over the two sacred Harams. <u>They used to attribute themselves to the Hanbali School but they believed that only they were Muslims and that who ever opposed their beliefs were</u>

Rashid Ahmad was an encyclopedia of knowledge (*Allama*)! Even after losing his eyesight the Deobandi Shaykh could find a ruling in *Radd al-Muhtar* simply by touch. Here is one such famous incident: "He took the book [*Radd al-Muhtar* popularly known as 'Shaami' in the Subcontinent] and turned two-third of the pages to the right and one third to the left and opened a page and said, **'look at the bottom side of [the] left page'**. It was found that the ruling was very much present there. Everyone was amazed" (*Arwahe Salasa*, 292). Let us presume for a moment that Muhammad ibn Adam is correct about Gangohi being unaware of Allama Ibn Abidin's ruling. This still doesn't explain how his students came to know about the aforementioned ruling and endorse it in the Deobandi Aqida Book, *al-Muhannad ala al-Mufannad* (1323 A.H./1905 C.E.), when their own teacher allegedly never heard of it. Twenty-four major scholars affiliated to the Deobandi school including Khalil Ahmad, Ashraf Ali Thanwi and Mahmud al-Hasan Deobandi affirmed what Allama Ibn Abidin ﵁ said in *Radd al-Muhtar* shortly *after* the death of their teacher and guide in 1905 C.E.[74]!

Didn't one of them feel obliged to politely point-out this ruling and protect their Shaykh from his opponents, who used this term against him? Are we to believe that Allama Muhaddith Rashid Ahmad Gangohi was the *only* Sunni scholar in the Subcontinent who was unaware of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab's deviant position *and* the contents of *Radd al-Muhtar*? Ibn Adam might rebut that the respected Shaykh was **"initially unaware,"** as he

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polytheists (mushrik), thus they considered the killing of those who were from the Ahl al-Sunnah and their scholars to be legitimate, until Allah Most High destroyed their might and power.' (Radd al-Muhtar, 3/339-340, chapter regarding the followers of Abd al-Wahhab, the Khawarij of our times)" see Muhammad ibn Adam, "Shaykh Rashid Ahmad Gangohi's Stance on the Najdis" (2005), accessed on 30 August 2009; available from http://www.daruliftaa.com/question.asp?txt_QuestionID=q-18272411. Underline is the compiler's emphasis.

[74] Muhammad ibn Adam of Darul Iftaa in Leicester, UK, "Have you edited the Deobandi Aqida Book al-Muhannad ala al-Mufannad and if so, Where Can I get a Copy?" (2006), accessed on 27 October 2009; available from http://www.daruliftaa.com/question.asp?txt_QuestionID=q-19001186.

mentioned earlier. But, if that *is* the case then why didn't Rashid Ahmad Gangohi change his stance on the Najdis *before* his death especially since it was their "official belief?" Perhaps, the scholars of Deoband only changed their stance after being denounced as Wahhabis by 33 Ulama from Mecca and Madinah! After all according to Muhammad ibn Adam, *al-Muhannad ala al-Mufannad* was written to prove their "Sunni-ness[75]".

Despite his supposed ignorance on the topic; Gangohi **did not** hesitate to issue *Fawata* supporting the Wahhabis as strict Hanbalis with good beliefs and a good, albeit harsh, founder. If this is true, then he issued his *Fatawa* on the basis of hearsay. The scholars of Deoband should recall the words of the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, who said:

> "'It is lying enough for a man to repeat everything he hears' (*Muslim*, 1.10: 5. S), because as Imam Nawawi observes, 'one generally hears both truth and falsehood, and to repeat everything one hears without checking will necessarily mean telling lies' (*Sharh Sahih Muslim*, 1.75)[76]."

There are other gaping holes in Muhammad ibn Adam's doddering argument which could be enumerated here, albeit at the cost of being tangential to the main purpose of this book. Suffice it to say that the Deobandi defense of Rashid Ahmad Gangohi's *Fatawa* is totally ahistorical. To presume that "al-Najdi was initially known in the Subcontinent as a reformer of Sunnah, and the one who strived greatly in rejecting Bid'a and establishing the Sunnah[77]" is patently wrong-- unless of course, one is forwarding the opinion of Ismail

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75 Ibid.

76 Nuh Keller, "Iman, Kufr, and Tafir," accessed 7December 2009; available from http://shadhilitariqa.com/site/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=37&Itemid=20.

77 Muhammad ibn Adam of Darul Iftaa in Leicester, UK, "Shaykh Rashid Ahmad Gangohi's Stance on the Najdis" (2005), accessed on 30 August 2009; available from http://www.daruliftaa.com/question.asp?txt_QuestionID=q-18272411.

Dihlawi. Even today the scholars of Deoband affirm that *Taqwiyat al-Iman* is "an authentic book." They also shower laurels upon Ibn Wahhab praying that Allah's mercy to be upon a tyrant and rebel. A Muslim from the United States of America inquired: "Is Taqwiyat-ul-Iman [a] reliable book?" and on August 5, 2007, Darul Ifta, Darul Uloom Deoband, replied: "It is an authentic book. For details, please study ***Ibaraat-e-Akaabir*** (written by Hazrat Maulana Sarfaraz Safdar)[78]." On July 18, 2008, the scholars of Wahhabi University wrote:

> "**Najdi is called one who is attributed to a great reformer and scholar Hadhrat**[79] **Shiakh Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab Najdi (رحمة الله عليہ). This great reformist was accused of many things; therefore the opponents attribute us to him for irritating us.** It is useful to study the book *Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab ke khilaf propaganda aur Hindustan ke Ulam-e-Haq per uske asaraat* [The Propaganda against Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab and its effect on the Rightly Guided Ulama of India] written by Hadhrat Maulana Manzoor Nomani[80]".

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[78] Darul Ifta, Darul Uloom Deoband, accessed on 8 November 2009; available from http://darulifta-deoband.org/viewfatwa.jsp?ID=1317.

[79] In South Asian culture the title Hadhrat means "presence." It is supposed to be given to righteous men, who are in a state of constant remembrance of Allah ﷻ. A murderer, tyrant, and rebel should be condemned, imprisoned, and put to death *by* the central Islamic authority. The scholars of Deoband **should not** praise and honor a man whose hands are stained with the blood of Muslims.

[80] Darul Ifta, Darul Uloom Deoband, accessed on 27 October 2009; available from http://darulifta-deoband.org/viewfatwa.jsp?ID=5177. Bold is the compiler's emphasis. According to Allamah Kaukab Noorani Okarvi, *Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab ke khilaf propaganda aur Hindustan ke Ulam-e-Haq per uske asaraat* seeks to prove that there is no ideological difference between "Hadhrat Shiakh Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab Najdi (**رحمة الله عليہ**)" and the Ulama of Deoband. One such similarity can be seen in their condemnation of pilgrimage to Sufi shrines (*ziyarat*). In this respect, famous Deobandi scholars of note like Muhammad Manzoor Nomani and Muhammad Zakariyya have even declared themselves to be **"staunch Wahhabis"** as they didn't want the grave of Muhammad Ilyas to become a source of magnetism for their Jama'at (Hadrat Allama Arshadul-Qaadiri, *Tablighi Jama'at: In the Light of Facts and Truth*, 79-80). Two very

Darul Uloom Deoband is praising "a great reformer and scholar," who said that invoking blessings on the Prophet ﷺ was reprehensible and disliked (makruh) in Shari'ah. A man who was condemned by his own teachers (Shaykh Muhammad Ibn Sulayman al-Kurdi ﵀ and Shaykh Muhamad Hayah al-Sind ﵀) and brother (Sulayman ﵀), who wrote a book entitled *al-Sawaiq* to refute Ibn Wahhab's innovative and subversive creed. Under the leadership of "Hadhrat Shiakh Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab Najdi (رحمة الله عليه)" the Wahhabis massacred the people of Taif killing everyone in sight[81]. *Fatawa Rashidiyya* and Darul Ifta represent the *real* Deobandi Aqida Book, whereas, *al-Muhannad ala al-Mufannad* was written to beguile and mislead Sunni Muslims (scholars and laymen alike).

Muhammad ibn Adam should visit Darul Ifta, Darul Uloom Deoband, and get his story straight before publishing a fatwa about his elder! Why do the scholars of Deoband, past and present, issue fatawa that contradict their "official belief" and *Radd al-Muhtar*, the primary reference for fatwa in the

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prominent Deobandi scholars endorsed *Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab ke khilaf propaganda aur Hindustan ke Ulam-e-Haq per uske asaraat*, namely, Muhammad Zakariyya Kandhlawi (1898-1982) and Qari Muhammad Tayyab (d. 1983). The former had great affection for **Rashid Ahamd Gangohi**, who was his primary teacher in hadith. He is also the nephew of Muhammad Ilyas (founder of the Tabligh movement), and a successor (khalifa) and representative (na'ib) of **Khalil Ahmad Saharanpuri**. While the latter, Qari Muhammad Tayyab, was the grandson of **Muhammad Qasim Nanotwi**. He received spiritual guidance from **Ashraf Ali Thanwi**, and graduated from Darul Uloom Deoband in 1336 A.H./1918 C.E. He served as the principal of his grandfather's seminary for a period of about 50 years. By the way, Muhammad Manzoor Nomani also authored *Tabligh Jamaat*. Ernst and Lawrence observe that "even though both [Jam'at-i Islami and the Tablighis] adopt a style of leadership that presumes the authority of a Sufi master, they try to annual the traditional order and their sites, especially at Nizamuddin in Delhi, perhaps because of its enormous symbolic capital" (*Sufi Martyrs of Love*, 104). They further say that, "In the case of the twentieth-century missionary society of the Tablighi Jama'at, reformism amounted to a sublimation and simplification of Sufi piety. In the end, the Tablighis rejected institutional Sufism altogether" (Ibid, 107). **This is the inevitable outcome of embracing the ideology of Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab in part or full.**

[81] Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, *Encyclopedia of Islamic Doctrine: Beliefs* (Mountain View: As-Sunna Foundation of America, 1998), 1:188-193.

Hanafi school? Either they are Sunnis following in the footsteps of Allama Ibn Abidin ؓ or Wahhabi sympathizers, who admirer "a great reformer and scholar Hadhrat Shiakh Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab Najdi (رحمة الله عليه)." But they **cannot** be both as the creed of Ibn Wahhab is diametrically opposed to that of Allama Ibn Abidin ؓ, i.e. the *Ahle Sunnat wal Jama'at*. One is an innovation leading to the Fire of Hell and the other is a Path to Salvation.

Deoband: Aqaid of Unbelief

The extreme positions taken by Wahhab and Dihlawi inescapably led the founders of Deoband to the same end, heresy. While Nanotwi denied *Khatam ul-Nabuwwat* (the finality of Prophethood), Gangohi forwarded the heresy that a lie told by God is possible. His apologist, Khalil Ahmad, belittled the Prophet ﷺ by arguing that his blessed knowledge is *inferior to* Satan and the Angel of Death. Ashraf Ali Thanwi went so far as to compare the Prophet's ﷺ knowledge to madmen, animals and beasts. In Chapter IV: Verbal Abuse, the verbatim statements of the above scholars will be examined.

Naturally such blasphemous assertions found a great deal of opposition from the *Ahle Sunnat* 'Ulama. Amongst the most stalwart opponents of the Deobandis, was the great luminary, A'la Hadrat Imam Ahmed Raza ؓ. After waiting for more than a decade for the founder of Darul Uloom Deoband to clarify what he actually meant to say it had become clear that the Deobandis were not willing to retract their disgraceful statements despite repeated warnings! Their treachery reached new depths with the publication and propagation of *Hifzul Iman* (Protection of Faith) by Ashraf Ali Thanwi. The august Mujaddid ؓ was left with little choice but to issue a fatwa of kufr against them in 1902. Not surprisingly, a large number of scholars came forward in support of this verdict. As many as three-hundred and one scholars from the Arab world and the Subcontinent endorsed *Husam al-Haramayn* declaring these *four* men unbelievers (*kafirs*).

Strangely enough, in what is a straightforward attack on the Lord of Truth and His Beloved Prophet ﷺ, the Deobandis till date **have not** acknowledged their heinous transgression more than a century later. This obstinacy in the face of open truth renders one to feel that only the diabolical quality of arrogance could have led many a Deobandi scholar to such insolence. What's more, the Deobandis have virtually captured the market when it comes to making "dawa", often inviting people to a seemingly pious and noncontentious brand of Islam. This school has gathered many an unsuspecting adherent, especially in the West where their antics have not had to bear the scorching gaze of a clearheaded and accomplished *Alim*, such as A'la Hadrat رضي الله عنه. As a result, this devilry goes forth unabated and the ordinary Muslim, unaware of the traps that lay in store for him, is inevitably the final victim. What follows is a summary of Nuh Keller's convoluted essay that reads like a veritable apologetic for the Deobandi Shaykhs.

THE APOLOGIST

According to SunniPath Academy, "Shaykh Nuh Keller is an American-Muslim master of Islamic spirituality, specialist in Islamic Law, and translator[82]." He possesses ijazas (certificates of authorization) in Islamic jurisprudence and spirituality from shaykhs in Syria and Jordan and teaches courses on *tasawwuf* at SunniPath Academy[83]. In 1996, he became a full shaykh of the Shadhili Tariqa[84].

Iman, Kufr, and Takfir: A Deobandi Perspective

Those wishing to write about the Barelwi-Deobandi conflict on the Indian Subcontinent must know something about Urdu or at the very least, know someone who does. For this reason, Nuh Keller's apologetic was written with the help of two very important people: Hamza Karamali[85] and Faraz Rabbani[86]. They were responsible for translating and interpreting certain Urdu texts and phrases for their teacher (Keller). Both were born in Karachi, Pakistan and hold the scholars of Deoband in great regard and respect. "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir" was written in 2007 when all three men were based in Amman, Jordan. Like Keller, Hamza Karamali is a teacher at SunniPath Acadamy. Faraz Rabbani also taught at SunniPath from 2003-2008 and writes for White Thread Press, a Deobandi publishing house.

[82] See http://www.sunnipath.com/about/shaykhnuh.aspx.
[83] Ibid.
[84] See http://shadhilitariqa.com/site/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=3.
[85] Endnote 27 reads, "[27] The author would like to thank Hamza Karamali for his English translation of the pages quoted in this section from the Urdu of Khalil Ahmad Saharanpuri's *al-Barahin al-qati'a* and Ashraf 'Ali Thanwi's *Hifz al-iman*" (Iman, Kufr, and Takfir).
[86] Endnote 34 says, "[34] The author's thanks to Faraz Rabbani, who translated the fatwa's text from Urdu to English" (Iman, Kufr, and Takfir).

An Outline of the Argument

Throughout the rebuttal, we will occasionally refer to the following sections of Nuh Keller's article. This outline of "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir" was excerpted verbatim in the order it appeared as it was posted as of December 13, 2009, from http://www.shadhiliteachings.com/. The headings, subheadings, and quotes are Keller's. Bold is the compiler's emphasis. The reader will notice that this article on iman, kufr, and takfir serves only one purpose. One wonders if the question itself isn't canned. Beneath the outline is a summary of the apologetic in the author's own words.

Iman, Kufr, and Takfir

Question: "Is someone who has an idea that is *kufr* or 'unbelief' thereby an 'unbeliever'?"

Response: "The short answer, somewhat surprisingly, is 'not necessarily.' In some cases such a person is, and in some not."

I. Oneself: "Life is a gamble, whose stakes are paradise or hell."

   a. THINGS THAT EVERYONE KNOWS: "**To deny anything of the first category above constitutes plain and open unbelief.** It includes such things as denying the oneness of Allah, **the attributes of prophethood, that prophetic messengerhood has ended with Muhammad (Allah bless him and give him peace)**; the resurrection of the dead; the Final Judgement; the recompense; the everlastingness of paradise and hell; the obligatoriness of the prayer, zakat, fasting Ramadan, or the pilgrimage; the unlawfulness of wine or adultery; **or anything else that is unanimously concurred upon and necessarily known by Muslims**, since there is no excuse not to know these things in the lands of Islam; though for someone new to the religion, or raised in a wilderness, outside of the lands of Islam, or some other place where ignorance of the religion is rife and unavoidable, their ruling

becomes that of the second category. As Imam Nawawi explains: '**Any Muslim who denies something that is necessarily known to be of the religion of Islam is adjudged a renegade and an unbeliever (kafir)** unless he is a recent convert or was born and raised in the wilderness or for some similar reason has been unable to learn his religion properly. **Muslims in such a condition should be informed about the truth, and if they then continue as before, they are adjudged non-Muslims, as is also the case with any Muslim who believes it permissible to commit adultery, drink wine, kill without right, or do other acts that are necessarily known to be unlawful** (*Sharh Sahih Muslim,* 1.150).'"

b. THINGS NOT EVERYONE KNOWS
c. THINGS DISAGREED UPON BY ULEMA

II. OTHERS: "The first thing to know about declaring someone an unbeliever is that the *'aqida* or 'Islamic belief' of anyone who has spoken the Testification of Faith 'There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah,' is legally valid until incontrovertibly proven otherwise."

a. THE ENORMITY OF CHARGING A MUSLIM WITH UNBELIEF
b. THE TRUE MEASURE OF UNBELIEF

III. THE LEGAL CRITERIA FOR UNBELIEF

a. WORDS THAT ENTAIL LEAVING ISLAM
b. THE FALLACY OF HEARSAY EVIDENCE: **"**We have not mentioned the comparatively recent phenomenon of printed books whose contents are established by copyrights as the work of a particular author in archives such as the Library of Congress or the British Library. **For such works, the thoroughness of documentation suggests that authors bear**

full legal responsibility for what is in them. But it should be noted that if there is any statement in an author's printed work that seems to be *kufr*, it must be plainly expressed, not merely implied, for otherwise the accuser has committed another fallacy, to which we now turn." [Note: This is the last sentence in this subsection, which sets-up Keller's acquittal of the Deobandi Shaykhs.]

c. THE FALLACY OF IMPUTED INTENTIONALITY: "Words are judged by what the speaker intends, not necessarily what the hearer apprehends. **If an utterance is unambiguous and its context plain, there is normally only one possible intention.** But according to the Hanafi school, if a statement may conceivably be intended in either of two ways, one valid, the other unbelief (kufr), it cannot be the basis for a fatwa of the *kufr* of the person who said it."
   i. *Intentional and Unintentional Insult*
   ii. *The Barelwi-Deobandi Conflict on the Indian Subcontinent*
   iii. *The Six Disputed 'Aqida Issues*
   iv. *The Imputed Insult*
   v. *Ahmad Reza and the Prophet's Knowledge of the unseen*
   vi. *What Khalil Ahmad Said*
   vii. *A Discussion of Khalil Ahmad's Evidence*
   viii. *The Words of Ashraf Ali Thanwi* [Note: The summary appears near the end of this section.]
   ix. *Conclusions:* "Imputed intentionality is a fallacy because the rigorously authenticated proofs we have seen are too clear to misunderstand that sometimes offense may be given to Allah or His messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace) that was not originally intended as an offense—and is therefore without the legal consequences it would have had if it had been intentional."

d. THE FALLACY OF *TAKFIR* BY ASSOCIATION: Endnote 35 appears under this subheading, wherein, Nuh Keller alleges that scholars and muftis withdrew their endorsements of *Husam al-Haramayn* when the Deobandis presented their side, **"some of the most salient points of which have been conveyed in the previous section [i.e. *Conclusions*],"** which means they purportedly changed their position because Imam Ahmed Raza ﷺ committed the fallacy of imputed intentionality! **Bear this in mind when reading Chapter IX: Denial of Disbelief.**

A Summary of the Argument

Below is a summary of Keller's argument in "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir," excerpted verbatim as it was posted as of December 7, 2009. The author is writing about Imam Ahmed Raza's ﷺ fatwa, *Husam al-Haramayn*[87]:

> "His fatwa of kufr against the Deobandis, however, was a mistake. It was not legally valid in the Hanafi school for the two reasons named by Imam Haskafi at the beginning of this essay, namely,
>
> A fatwa may not be given of the unbelief of a Muslim whose words are interpretable as having a valid meaning, or about the unbelief of which there is a difference of scholarly opinion, even if weak (Radd al-muhtar [ala ad-Dur al-Mukhtar[88]], 3.289).

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[87] Nuh Keller is actually writing about the fatwa of kufr, *Al-Mo'tamad Al-Mustanad* (The Reliable Proofs), within *Husam al-Haramayn*; however, he **does not** refer to it by name in "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir." For this reason, we shall be using the name *Husam al-Haramayn* as a synonym for *Al-Mo'tamad Al-Mustanad*.

[88] *Radd al-muhtar* is a commentary on Imam Haskafi's ﷺ *al-Durr al-mukhtar* by Allama Ibn Abidin ﷺ. A'la Hadrat ﷺ cites *al-Durr al-mukhtar* in *Husam al-Haramayn* and *Tamheedul Iman*. Further, *Jadd al-Mumtar 'ala Radd al-Muhtar* is A'la Hadrat's brilliant marginalia to Allama Ibn Abidin's work.

First, the Deobandis' words are interpretable as 'having a valid meaning,' for they can be construed as making a distinction, however crudely, between Allah's knowledge of the 'absolute unseen' and a man's knowledge of the 'relative unseen.' Saharanpuri and Thanwi both later explicitly mentioned this in their defense of themselves and other Deobandi figures.

Secondly, there *is* a valid 'difference of opinion' about the unbelief of such words, for 'even if weak' in the above Hanafi text means, according to commentator Ibn 'Abidin, 'even if the difference in opinion is found only in another school (*madhhab*) of jurisprudence' (*Radd al-muhtar*, 3.289). As we have seen, a difference of opinion *does* exist in another school, namely the position of the Shafi'i Imam Subki that one must give 'due consideration to the intention behind that which gives offense' (*al-Sayf al-maslul* (c00), 135)- that is, *even when offense has been given*. In this instance, 'due consideration' means that if it is possible that Deobandi scholars intended something besides insult to the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace)- for example, a heated rebuttal of supposed innovation (bid'a)- this legally prevents the judgment of kufr against them.

The *sahih* hadiths we have cited above show how strong this position of Subki's is, for the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was in one instance reproved by an upset wife with the words 'I don't see but that your Lord rushes to fulfill your own whims' (*Bukhari*, 6:147:4788); in another, accused of favoritism by those who said, 'May Allah forgive the Messenger of Allah: he gives to Quraysh and neglects us' (*Bukhari*, 4.114:3147); and in another, actually seized and choked by a bedouin demanding charity (*Burkhari*,

> 4.115:3149)- none of which did he consider a deliberate offense or *kufr*, because each was interpretable as an unintentional insult.
>
> It is also noteworthy that in each of these instances, the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) with instinctive compassion and wisdom gave due consideration to the emotional states that pushed people beyond the ordinary bounds of *adab* or manners with him. The vehemence of Deobandi writers 'defending Islam against shirk,' however misplaced, plainly affected the way they spoke about the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace). The above hadiths suggest that due consideration should be given to the emotions aroused by the 'fatwa wars' of their times, just as the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) gave consideration to people's emotions[89]."

This analysis is *only* convincing to a layman that has never read Imam Ahmed Raza's ﷺ fatawa, such as *Husam al-Haramayn* and *Tamheedul Iman*. What follows is their "affected speech" or verbal abuse against Allah and His Beloved Prophet ﷺ.

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[89] Nuh Keller, "Iman, Kufr, and Tafir," accessed 7December 2009; available from http://shadhilitariqa.com/site/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=37&Itemid=20. This essay is also avialiable from http://shadhiliteachings.com/ under articles, "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir."

VERBAL ABUSE

From the onset of this refutation we must establish that it is obligatory to love and honor the Prophet ﷺ more than the members of one's household: one's child, father or even the whole of humanity! It is essential for those who claim to love Allah to love the Prophet ﷺ. How many times did the Companions lay down their life and sacrifice everything and everyone for the Habib ﷺ? Zayd ibn Harithah ؓ chose the Prophet ﷺ over his own father and uncle when he said: "I would not choose any man in preference to thee. Thou art unto me as my father and my mother." He chose slavery over freedom, and confounded his family[90]! While guarding the Messenger of Allah ﷺ five of the Ansar threw themselves on the enemy and fought till their death. One of the five was mortally wounded, and began to drag himself along the ground so that he might die with his cheek resting upon the foot of the Habib ﷺ. Likewise, Talhah ؓ and Shammas of Makhzum ؓ became a living shield for the beloved ﷺ. On another part of the battlefield, Anas ibn Nadr ؓ exhorted the Muslims to, "Rise and die, even as he died," upon hearing that "Muhammad is slain!" When the Battle of Uhud was over, he was found martyred with more than 80 wounds[91]! And who can forget how Abu Bakr ؓ gave **everything** he owned to the Prophet ﷺ, and when the beloved asked him what he had left for his family Abu Bakr ؓ replied, "Allah and His Messenger." Alhamdulillah! Perfection of faith is dependent upon love and respect for the Prophet ﷺ! Turn to the Glorious Qur'an and Sahih Ahadith for guidance[92]. A Muslim cannot taste the

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[90] Martin Lings, *Muhammad: His Life based on the Earliest Sources* (Lahore: Qindeel Press, 1987), 38.

[91] Ibid., 184-186.

[92] *Holy Qur'an*, (48:8-9), (9:24), and (33:56); *Sahih Muslim*, The Book of Faith: Kitab al-Imam, Numbers 70 and 71; and *Sahih Bukhari*, Book 2: Belief, Numbers 13, 14, and 15. Abu Huraira ؓ and Anas bin Malik al-Ansari ؓ narrated these *Sahih Ahadith*. See *Sahih Bukhari* (tr. M. Muhsin Khan) and *Sahih Muslim* (tr. Abdul Hamid Siddiqui) at http://www.usc.edu/schools/college/crcc/engagement/resources/texts/muslim/search.html.

sweetness of faith without love and respect for the Prophet ﷺ [93]. It is from the necessities of the religion and a basic requirement of faith and salvation. Allah's Beloved Messenger ﷺ said:

> "By Him in Whose Hands my life is, none of you will have faith till he loves me more than his father and his children" (*Sahih Bukhari*, Volume 1, Book 2: Belief, Number 13).

It is reported in *Sahih Muslim* that the Prophet ﷺ said,

> "None of you is a believer till I am dearer to him than his child, his father and the whole of mankind" (The Book of Faith: Kitab al-Iman, Number 71).

According to the Qadri Sufi Shaykh, Muhaqqiq 'Abd al-Haq Muhaddith Dihlawi ؓ (d. 1642), "The sign of the faith of a true believer is that the Holy Prophet ﷺ should be the most beloved and exalted to him… **This means that one should be happy and content even if his life is lost, but one should never tolerate any right of the Prophet ﷺ being neglected**" (*Ashi'ah al-Lam'at*, 1:47). It is the unanimous belief of the Community from the Salaf (predecessors) to the Khalaf (their successors) that disrespect toward the Prophet ﷺ is a capital offense and manifest Kufr. It is Haram, therefore, to disrespect the Messenger of Allah ﷺ [94]. The Shaykh-ul-Hadith of Darul Ulooom Deoband, Mawlana Husain Ahmad Tandwi, writes concerning this issue:

> "Disrespecting the Prophet sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam is Kufr. Never mind clear disrespect, even if a person uttered words that

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[93] *Sahih Bukhari*, Book 2: Belief, Number 15 and *Sahih Muslim*, The Book of Faith (Kitab al-Imam), Number 67 and 68.

[94] Mawlana Yaseen Akhtar Misbahi, *AHLU'S SUNNAH WA'L JAMA'AH AN INTRODUCTION*, tr. Muhammad Aqdas, accessed on 13 September 2009; available from http://www.freewebs.com/barelwi/IntroToAhlusSunnah.pdf, 15.

> might resemble disrespect, even this will cause it to be ruled Kufr" (*Maktubat Shaykh-ul-Islam*, 2:165).

Imam Haskafi ﷺ in *Durr al-mukhtar* states: "If someone denies *any* of the necessities of the religion, then he is a Kafir (disbeliever)[95]". Love and respect for the Prophet ﷺ is from the necessities of the religion. The Deobandis change *the meaning* of their words because they are acutely aware of this fact. They **do not** deny their statements of Kufr (unbelief). Moreover, they glibly acknowledge that their words *were* offensive and unacceptable[96]. Yet they insist that their malicious passages have a valid *meaning* enjoining a good intention[97]. Their insolence causes the Ummah to erroneously think that the wrong they perpetrated was insignificant. Thus, the Deobandi Shaykhs have exonerated themselves from the charge of Kufr (unbelief).

Keep in mind that one becomes a disbeliever by denying anything necessarily known to be of the religion. Such a person cannot be considered a Muslim after the judgment of Kufr has been issued against him. He must make *tawba* (repentance) to renew his Islam. Love and respect for the Prophet ﷺ is the heart of Iman, while insulting the dignity and honor of the Habib is an act of infidelity by scholarly consensus (Ijma'a)[98]. There are three criteria and conditions that have to be met before someone can be ruled an apostate:

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[95] Imam Ahmed Raza ﷺ, "The Condemnation of Raafizee Tabarraee Shia," tr. Allama Shamsul Haque Misbahi, accessed on 19 September 2009; available from http://www.razanw.org/modules/products/print.php?itemid=8.

[96] Keller writes: "This does not mean that the words chosen by these writers were acceptable, even if 'retorting against *bid'a*,' or 'fighting *shirk*.'" Similarily he says: "Khalil Ahmad's and Ashraf 'Ali Thanwi's comparisons of the Prophet's knowledge (Allah bless him and give him peace) *were* offensive in their wording, and certainly not of the 'ordinary scholarly discourse' acceptable among Muslims" (Iman, Kufr, and Takfir).

[97] The position of the Deobandi Shaykhs is summarized in the following line from Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*: **"And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true."**

[98] *Thesis,* 4:1140-143.

1. Takallam - that a particular statement was certainly said;
2. Kalam - that such a statement is certainly blasphemous;
3. Mutakallim - that such a statement was certainly said by the person.

When there is not the frailest doubt in any of the above criteria or when there is not an acceptable explanation, only then can a ruling of apostasy be issued[99]. "An acceptable explanation" in this case means that one or more of the criteria and conditions have not been satisfactorily met. For instance, if the person in question denies making the blasphemous statement or an individual has been misquoted by another party then he is not guilty of unbelief[100]. Examples of statements that are not blasphemous would be the chaste words of the Ansar ﷺ and Hadrat 'A'ishah Siddiqah ﷺ, which Nuh Keller twists into "unintentional insults" in his libelous apologetic. Insh'Allah, we will explore this point fully in Chapter VII: Sahih Hadith.

The Deobandi Shaykhs were ruled apostates because their statements fulfill all three of the aforementioned criteria and conditions. The passages in their books were written in the common vernacular (Urdu) so the apparent meaning which is easily seen and commonly understood by the native Urdu speaker applies. In consequence, the following rule of Shari'ah applies to them, namely, "there is no doubt about the infidelity and the punishment by death of a person that uses abusive language against the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. All four leading Imams have the same opinion" (*Fatawa Shami*, 3:312)[101]. Here are some additional Hanafi fatawa on the issue from SunniPath Academy:

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[99] Mawlana Yaseen Akhtar Misbahi, *AHLU'S SUNNAH WA'L JAMA'AH AN INTRODUCTION*, tr. Muhammad Aqdas, accessed on 13 September 2009; available from http://www.freewebs.com/barelwi/IntroToAhlusSunnah.pdf, 18.

[100] Subhadeep Bhattacharjee, "Shahrukh Khan gets a 'fatwa'" (June 23, 2009), accessed on 7 October 2009; available from http://entertainment.oneindia.in/bollywood/news/2009/shahrukh-khan-fatwa-230609.html.

[101] Refer to Appendix 2 and 3 in *Thesis* (4:140-143) for further proof from the great Ulama of the Ahle Sunnat.

> **And there is consensus** that the slanderer of the Prophet Sallallahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam is a Murtadd [apostate]. "The ibarat of Shifa is as follows: **Abu Bakr ibn al-Mundhir** held that the consensus of the scholars on the matter that the slanderer of the Prophet Sallallahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam should be executed (killed). And others who said so are **Malik ibn Anas, Layth, Ahmed ibn Is-Haaq** and so is **the Madh-hab of Shafiyi** and it is also the ruling of **Hazrat Abu Bakr RaDiyallahu 'Anhu**, and neither is his Tawba (repentance) accepted. Others who said so are **Abu Hanifa** and **his followers (AS-Haab)** and **Thawri** and **the Scholars of Kufa** and **Awzayee.**...." (Radd al-Muhtar vol.3/p.294)
>
> "And the summary of all this is that **there is Ijma'a (consensus)** that he who insults the Prophet Sallallahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam is a Kafir." (Radd al-Muhtar vol.3/p.294)
>
> Elsewhere he (**Ibn Aabideen**) says: "I say, and I have seen it in Kitaabul Kharaaj by **Imam Yousuf** that if a Muslim slanders the Messenger Sallallahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam or belies him (kadhdhaba) or finds fault ('aaba) or degrades (tanaqqasahu) be it known that he has disbelieved in Allah Ta'aalah and his wife goes out of his Nikah.. (Baanat minhu imra-atahu)" (Radd al-Muhtar vol.3/p.291)[102]

The above fatawa are from *Radd al-Muhtar*, Volume Three. This is the same volume that Nuh Keller quotes in defense of the Deobandis. However, Keller neglects to mention that a Muslim who slanders, belies, finds fault, or **degrades** the Messenger ﷺ has disbelieved in Allah Ta'ala and his wife

[102] Shaykh Gibril F Haddad, "Takfir - Anathematizing" (September 14, 2005), accessed on 8 October 2009; available from http://qa.sunnipath.com/issue_view.asp?HD=1&ID=216&CATE=13. Bold is the compiler's emphasis.

goes out of his Nikah. This is the postion of Imam-e-Azam, Abu Hanafi ﵁ and his followers, such as his famous student Imam Yousuf ﵁. And the Shafii school concurs!

O Muslims! When the said criteria and conditions for ruling someone an apostate have been met, the principle of interpreting a Muslim's words in a better manner **does not** apply, nor does the "weak opinion" of enjoining a good intention. The Ummah might rightly ask: When is it "good" let alone justifiable to degrade the sanctity of Prophethood? Whatever excuses and arguments they make to the contrary are invalid and mistaken! Only a public apology retracting their accursed words would have sufficed- nothing else.

But for the sake of argument and to prove that "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir" is detrimental to the Muslim community at large, read carefully the *verbatim* statements of blasphemy written by these *four* men and presented to the illustrious Haramayn Ulama a century ago. Imam Ahmed Raza ﵁ brought the printed papers in which the Deobandi Shaykhs called Allah ﷿ a liar to Mecca and Medinah. He carried one photo with other books for presenting to the Ulama. When *Tamheedul Iman* was written (circa 1908), this photo still existed in the records of the Government of Arabia[103]. A'la Hadrat ﵁ substantiated his charge with incontestable proof that more than one Haramayn Ulama was able to read. In Medina, Hadrat Mawlana Kareemullah ﵁ put immense effort into procuring confirmations and approvals for *Husam al-Haramayn*[104]. His Shaykh, Hadrat Mawlana Shah Muhammad Abdul Haq Alahabadi Muhajir Makki ﵁ (d.1836-1915), was born in Allahabad (India) and migrated to Mecca. As a native Urdu speaker, Hadrat Alahabadi ﵁ was able to read the evidence that A'la Hadrat ﵁ presented to the Haramayn Ulama. He endorsed and eulogized the fatwa of kufr. While in Mecca, Hadrat Mawlana Ahmad Ali Makki al-Imdadi ﵁ was

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[103] *Thesis*, 4:123.

[104] Amina Baraka, *A Tribute to Shaikhal-Islam As-Shaikh: Imam Ahmad Raza* (Stockport: Raza Academy Publications, 2005), 158.

fluent in Urdu and toured Bengal (India) several times. He was the son of Muhammad Ziadudin Bengali Qadri Chishti ﷺ and a *Khalifa* of Hajji Imdadullah Muhajir Makki ﷺ, the *Shaykhu'l-Mushaykh* of Muhammad Qasim Nanowti, Rashid Ahmad Gangohi, and Ashraf Ali Thanwi. He writes in praise of *Al-Mo'tamad Al-Mustanad* (the fatwa of kufr), thus:

> "This book is so comprehensive and authentic that its illustrious author seems to be a surging ocean of knowledge in view of his erudition. **Nobody can raise a hand before his genuine and accurate arguments**… Listen to me! He is a continent[105] and pious scholar and trustworthy of the ancestors. He is a light-house for the coming generations of Ulama. Whatever has been said in his glory is insufficient. He is, indeed, the pride of the elders. He is Maulana Ahmad Reza Khan. Allah, the Exalted, may shower upon him His special kindness and lengthen his life for the guidance of the true believers. **Today various bands in India are up to belie the arguments, which are based on the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah**[106]."

More than a century later, Hadrat Mawlana Ahmad Ali Makki al-Imdadi's ﷺ verdict serves as a warning and reminder. Let it be known that A'la Hadrat ﷺ **did not** bear false witness against the senior Ulama of Deoband, nor is he guilty of committing the fallacy of hearsay evidence. Now read the *verbatim* statements of disbelief written by these *four* men.

Statements Insulting Allah ﷻ

In emulation of Ismail Dilhawi, Rashid Ahmad Gangohi said that to lie is within the Power of Allah Ta'ala, i.e. Allah can lie. The Deobandi Shaykh remarked:

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105 Continent: exercising continence, i.e. self-restraint; restrictive

106 Imam Ahmad Raza ﷺ, *Hussam al-Haramayn*, tr. Alhaaj Bashir Hussain Nazim, available from http://www.razanw.org/modules/products/item.php?itemid=1.

> “The meaning of the possibility of (Allah) lying is that it is within the power of Allah to lie, meaning that whatever punishment has been promised (for the Kuffaar or sinner) by Allah, He has the Power to do the opposite to that even if He does not do it. Possibility does not necessarily mean occurrence, but that it can occur… So the belief of all the Scholars, Sufis and Ulema of Islam is that lies are within the Power of Allah[107].”

Why Rashid Ahmad attributed his aberrant opinion to “all the Scholars, Sufis and Ulema of Islam” is exceedingly troublesome to say the least, especially since the *Ahle Sunnat wal Jama’at* believes that His lying is intrinsically impossible! Sunnis affirm that “He is perfect far beyond any fault or flaw” (*aqida Tahawiyya*)[108]. Likewise, *Sharh al-‘Aqa’id* states: “Lying is a defect and so cannot be counted among the possibilities (*mumkinat*) nor does Divine power include it, and the same applies to all the different kinds of imperfections in relation [to] Him- exalted is He!- such as ignorance and powerlessness… It is incorrect to attribute to Him movement, displacement, ignorance, or lying because those are imperfections and imperfections are impossible for the Most High[109].” Rashid Ahmad Gangohi’s own Sufi Shaykh, Hajji Imdadullah Muhajir Makki ؓ said: “In view of the delicate nature of these matters [i.e. *imkan al-nazir* and *imkan al-kadhib*[110]], it won’t be surprising if discussions or investigations in these matters is forbidden.” He went on to say that there is no justification for talking about or discussing *imkan al-nazir* and *imkan al-kadhib*, but if someone has the habit of

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107 Rashid Ahmad Gangohi, *Fatawa Rashidiyya* (Delhi: Jayyad Barqi Press, n.d.), 1:20.
108 Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, *Encyclopedia of Islamic Doctrine: Beliefs* (Mountain View: As-Sunna Foundation of America, 1998), 1:43. This quote is taken from his translation of *The Creed of Imam al-Tahawi*, which is representative of the mainstream view.
109 Shaykh Gibril F Haddad, “Book Review of *Taqwiyat al-Iman: Strengthening of the Faith*,” available from http://mac.abc.se/home/onesr/d/tqi_e.pdf, 2.
110 *Imkan al-nazir* or “the possibility of an equal” (of the Prophet ﷺ). *Imkan al-kadhib* or “the possibility of lying” (on the part of Allah Most High!)

discussing it then one should do so privately. Hajji Imdadullah ﷺ discouraged his associates from publishing their arguments in books or magazines, and specifically mentioned that any writing on this topic should be in Arabic so that the general public does not get frustrated. Before closing he reiterated: "It is imperative that these matters are not discussed in public[111]."

What is faith? Everyone knows that it is to testify that Allah Ta'ala is great and true. One wonders what the word "faith" means after attributing the possibility of falsehood to the Maker, Almighty and Glorious is He[112]! There are certain things that Allah Ta'ala has made impossible for Himself. For instance, Allah ﷻ says in the *Hadith al-Qudsi* narrated by Sayyiduna Abu-Zarr al-Ghaffari ﷺ that "I have made oppression unlawful for Me" (*Sahih Muslim*). Yet the proponents of *imkan al-nazir* and *imkan al-kabhib* present the Ayat, ﴿**Verily everything is within the Power of Allah**﴾ **(2:148)** to allege that "everything" encompasses *all* possibilities. And henceforth, "lying" was also included under the power of Allah ﷻ. If we accept this premise then it will also be within the power of Allah (logically speaking[113]) to create another God or to incarnate in a human form[114]. Who can preclude this as the learned scholar of Deoband has already affirmed that vices and defects are within the Divine power? If one rejoins that: "**He is God, the One and Only" (112:1)**. As he should being a Muslim of sound belief. Then he most also affirm that **"He is the Truth" (22:6)**! Shaykh Abdul al-Qadir Mohiuddin al-Jilani ﷺ points out that it is **"not permissible"** to apply

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111 Hajji Imdad Ullah Hanafi Muhajir Makki Chishti Saabri ﷺ, *Faisla Haft Masla*, accessed on 31 October 2009; available from http://www.maktabah.org/attachments/120_FHMasla.pdf, 8.
112 *Thesis*, 4:82.
113 Keller affirms that *imkan al-nazir* and *imkan al-kadhib* is "logically" within Allah's power.
114 Hadrat Nuri Mia ﷺ, *Horizons of Perfection* (Durban: Barkaatur-Raza Publications, 2005), 58-59.

the attribute of falsehood to the Maker[115]. The Sultan of Saints ﷺ was writing in the 6th Century Hijri, which means that *Ahle Sunnat* scholars like Hajji Imdadullah ﷺ and A'la Hadrat ﷺ, among countless other illustrious personalities, spoke the truth. This matter is forbidden! They were upon the creed of the *Khulafa al-Rashideen*, the Imams of religion and the latter scholars. The possibility of lying on the part of Allah Most High strikes at the very bedrock of Islamic Belief! In Chapter XI: Fallacies we discuss Nuh Keller's defense of Rashid Ahmad Gangohi.

Statements Denying Khatam ul-Nabuwwat (Finality of Prophethood)

In *Tahzeerun Nas*, Muhammad Qasim Nanotwi said that Khatam ul-Nabuwwat cannot simply be referring to Muhammad ﷺ as a prophet who chronologically came after all the others. He wrote:

> "According to the layman, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ being Khatam is supposed to have appeared after all the other prophets. But men of understanding and the wise know it very well that being the first or the last, chronologically, does not carry any weight. How could, therefore, the words of the Holy Qur'aṇ ﴾**But he is the messenger of Allah and the Seal of Prophets**﴿ **(33.40)** mean to glorify him? Yes, if this attribute (i.e. the attribute of being the final prophet) is not regarded as an attribute of praise (i.e. something worthy of praise, something special) and if this station (the Station of Finality of Prophethood - Khatimun-Nabiyeen) is not regarded as a station of praise (i.e. something deserving praise), then [one is left with the true but unsatisfactory conclusion] that him (Muhammad ﷺ) being the Final prophet with respect to time (i.e. chronologically) is a true statement [but this self-evident

[115] Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani ﷺ, *Sufficient Provision for Seekers of the Path of Truth* (Hollywood: Al-Baz Publications, 1995), tr. Muhtar Holland, 1:281.

> 'chronological fact'] cannot be the real/whole truth of this verse[116]."

Here the founder of Darul Uloom Deoband is affirming the literal meaning of Khatam ul-Nabuwwat. But Nanotwi insists that this verse must have a deeper meaning, which the common man **does not** understand. Thus on page 18 and 34 of *Tahzeerun Nas* he hypothesizes that another prophet *can* come after the time of Rasulullah ﷺ. Undoubtedly, this is an idea that the layman, even the scholars of Sunni Islam (past and present), would never entertain! On page 18 he writes,

> "In short, if the meaning of the word Finality is accepted as explained, then his Finality of Prophethood will not be exclusively attached to the past Prophet ﷺ. But even if for instance another Prophet appeared during the era of the Prophet ﷺ then too, his being the Final Prophet remains intact as normal[117]."

He reiterates this point again on page 34, and says:

> "If for instance even after the era of the Prophet ﷺ any Prophet is born, then too it will not make any difference to the Finality of Prophethood of the Prophet ﷺ [118]."

O Muslims! He **did not** say a false prophet may appear. No, he said another Nabi may be born without effecting Khatam ul-Nabuwwat! This possibility is impossible according to Imam al-Ashari ﵁ and Imam al-Marturdi ﵁ and those who followed them because "Any claim to prophecy

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[116] Muhammad Qasim Nanotwi, *Tahzeerun Nas* (Karachi: Darul Isha'at, n.d.), 4-5. Several paranthetical comments and explanations were used to convey the rough meaning of this text.
[117] Muhammad Qasim Nanotwi, *Tahzeerun Nas* (Karachi: Darul Isha'at, n.d.), 18.
[118] Muhammad Qasim Nanotwi, *Tahzeerun Nas* (Karachi: Darul Isha'at, n.d.), 34.

after him ﷺ is deviation and heresy" (*adiqa Tahawiyya*)[119]. Muhammad Qasim Nanotwi denied the meaning of *Khatam ul-Nabuwwat* or the Finality of Prophethood as held by the Companions, Scholars and even by our Master Muhammad ﷺ himself! He asserts that the belief of the scholars, i.e. "men of understanding and the wise" is different from that of the masses. Yet no fewer than nine refutations were written to his book by prominent Indian scholars[120]. In Bareilly, the foremost in opposition was Mawlānā Naqi Ali Khan ؓ (d. 1880). He published a work on *imkan al-nazir* in 1876[121]. In Badayun, Mawlānā Abdul Qadir ؓ, the son of Mawlānā Fazle Rasool Badayuni ؓ, strongly refuted the contents of *Tahzeerun Nas*. The Deobandi Shaykh disregarded the good counsel and repeated warnings of Mawlānā Muhammad Shah Punjabi ؓ, Mawlānā Fazle Majeed Badayuni ؓ, Mawlānā Hidayat Ali Barelwi ؓ, Mawlānā Faseehuddin Badayuni ؓ and Shaykh Muhammad Thanwi ؓ[122] among others. Ultimately, 301 Ulama from the Arab world and the Subcontinent declared his supposition kufr[123]!

Indeed the only Muslims that believe in Muhammad Qasim Nanotwi's aberrant interpretation are the followers of Mirza Ghulam Qadiani (d. 1908). Mirza Ghulm is the founder of the Ahmadiyya community and professed to be the promised Messiah and Mahdi[124]. In *Tahzeerun Nas* the founder of

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119 Hamza Yusuf, *The Creed of Imam al-Tahawi* (USA: Zaytuna Institute, 2007), 54.
120 Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India*, 212.
121 Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India*, 298.
122 Mawlana Yaseen Akhtar Misbahi, *AHLU'S SUNNAH WA'L JAMA'AH AN INTRODUCTION*, tr. Muhammad Aqdas, accessed on 13 September 2009; available from http://www.freewebs.com/barelwi/IntroToAhlusSunnah.pdf, 8-9.
123 Shaykh Faizan ul-Mustafa addresses the infidelity of Muhammad Qasim Nanotwi in his scholarly treatise "A Just Response to the Biased Author." The Barelwi Alim quotes the authentic books of Fiqh, such as Imam al-Ghazali ؓ in his *al-Iqtisad* and Qadhi Iyadh ؓ in his *Kitab al-Shifa*. He gives the original Arabic along with an English translation and commentary to refute Keller using the same sources. It must be understood that his refutation is written at the highest level of scholarship; careful reading is therefore advantageous. This essay is available from www.gatewaytomedia.com, 6-12, 27-29, and 79-82.
124 Hadrat Allama Arshadul-Qaadiri ؓ, *Tablighi Jama'at: In Light of Facts and Truth* (Durban: Barkaatur-Raza Publications, 2005), 120-125. The Qadiani/Ahmadi source in

Darul Uloom Deoband has hereby issued to all and sundry an open license to announce their own Prophethood! Muhammad Qasim Nanotwi has given his consent. According to him the announcement of a new Prophet **does not** affect the Finality of Prophethood. The Ahmadiyya movement simply brought into existence that possibility, which was declared possible by Qasim Nanotwi and his elder, Ismail Dihlawi. Nuh Keller actually refers to Ismail Dihlawi as a Deobandi in his defense of *imkan al-nazir*. He writes:

> "So those who say, as did some of the Deobandis, that Allah's creating a 'like' is hypothetically possible,[22][125] [Ismail al-Dahlawi, for example] are correct, in the very limited sense that

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the above reference actually quotes *Tahzeerun Nas* as proof of their founder's prophethood. Here is another example from the official website of the Ahmadiyya community, which cites the Deobandi Shaykh to substantiate their deviant belief. Notice that the Deobandi Shaykh gave this interpretation in other works besides *Tahzeerun Nas*. The Ahmadiyya website writes: "Maulana Muhammad Qasim Naunotawi, chief of Deobandi sect (the sect which today is in the forefront of those distorting the meaning of 'Khatamun-Nabbiyeen') writes: 'Charged with the duty of delivering Divine Commandments to the people, prophets may be likened to governors. They are God's vicegerents on earth. They therefore hold a position of authority. The office of a governor or minister is considered the highest in a chain of subordinate officers. A governor or a minister has the authority to set aside the orders or directives of his subordinates. Their orders, on the other hand, cannot be set aside by the subordinate officers. The final authority rests with the governor. Similarly, the one in whom prophethood found its perfection was declared The Seal of The Prophets - 'Khatamun-Nabbiyeen', as there is no rank higher than his' (Mobahesa Shahjahanpur pg. 24- 25). Here too, we find 'Khatamiyyat' meaning perfection and ultimate in prophethood and authority rather than meaning 'the last'," accessed on 24 November 2009; available from http://www.alislam.org/holyprophet/Khatam_english.pdf, 11. It should also be noted that Darul Uloom Deoband has reneged on their founder's interpretation and are now being accused of "distorting the meaning of 'Khatamun-Nabbiyeen'!" **Look at the amount of harm, discord, and misguidance that one supposition in matters of Aqida (belief) made to Muslim unity in India.** Underline is the compiler's emphasis.

[125] Here is Keller's endnote: "[22] Ismail al-Dahlawi, for example, said of Allah, 'His greatness is [such] that He can bring into being crores [tens of millions] of prophets, friends [awliya'], jinn, and angels equal to Jibril and Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and to disorder the entire world from earth to sky and create a new world in its place just by saying, *Kun* ['Be']' (*Taqwiat-ul-Iman* (c00), 37–38)."

> it is logically within Allah’s almighty power to do so—had He not already decided and declared that He never shall[126].”

The Deobandis **did not** qualify their statements like Keller. On pages 18 and 34 of *Tahzeerun Nas*, Nanotwi asserts that the appearance or birth of another Prophet **after** our Master Muhammad ﷺ will *not* affect the Finality of Prophethood. Where is the logic in this deviant assertion, which violates the grammar or diction of the Arabic Language and scholarly consensus (ijma‘)[127]? The appreance of another **genuine** prophet necessitates his becoming “*the final member* of that series,” which negates the meaning of this verse that is *Khatam ul-Nabuwwat* (33:40)! Besides if Allah ﷻ has already decided and declared that He shall **never** create an equal to our Master Muhammad ﷺ (as Keller himself admits), then how is such a supposition “logical” in the first place? Their “hypothetical possibility” contradicts the Divine Decree (33:40) and exposes the Ummah to imposters (Dajjals)! Hadrat Nuri Mia ؒ said the following on the issue: “It is explicit in the authentic books of *Aqa’id* that Almighty Allah ﷻ has ordained on His Divine Being not to create a second or similar to certain creations or do that

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[126] Ibid.

[127] In “Iman, Kufr, and Takfir,” Keller readily forgets his own admission to defend the Deobandis. He writes: “Allah says:

> ‘Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets’ (Qur’an 33:40),

where the word *khatim* or ‘seal’ in Arabic, when annexed (mudaf) to a series, as in the expression ‘Seal of the *Prophets,*’ can only mean *the final member* of that series through which it is complete and after which nothing may be added. This is the only possible lexical sense of the word in the context. Were there any doubt about this, it is also unanimously agreed upon by scholarly consensus (ijma‘), and explicitly stated by the Prophet himself (Allah bless him and give him peace) in many rigorously authenticated (sahih) hadiths, such as that in the *Musnad* of Imam Ahmad

> Prophetic messengerhood (risala) and prophethood (nubuwwa) have ceased: there shall be no messenger after me, nor any prophet (*Ahmad* (c00), 3.267: 13824).”

which He ﷻ condemns[128].” The Deobandis should accept that which Allah decrees instead of delving into ideation and transgression.

In *Husam al-Haramayn*, A'la Hadrat ﷺ followed the ruling found in reliable books of Fiqh like *Tatimmah* (appendix) and *Al-Ashbah* that whosoever denies *Khatam ul-Nabuwwat* is not a believer because it is from the necessities of the religion[129].

Statements Insulting the Prophet ﷺ

In an enormity that probably does not have any precedence in the history of Islam, the Deobandi scholars went on to credit Shaytan, the accursed, with more comprehensive knowledge than Prophet Muhammad ﷺ! Taking it a few steps further, they go on to assert that anyone who tries to prove the superior knowledge of Sayyiduna Rasulullah ﷺ commits polytheism (shirk)! Rashid Ahmad Gangohi endorsed and eulogized *Baraheen-e-Qatiah*, which was written by his apologist, Khalil Ahmad Anbethawi Saharanpuri. Khalil Ahmad writes:

> "Shaitan and the Angel of Death do have this extensive knowledge ['*ilm al-ghaib*] by categorical injunction, but there is no categorical injunction in respect of the knowledge the 'Pride of the World [ﷺ],' which rebuts all the injunctions and establishes a sort of polytheism[130]."

Khalil Ahmad states that "there is no categorical injunction," such as an undeniably decisive scriptural text to support the Prophet's ﷺ knowledge of

[128] Hadrat Nuri Mia ﷺ, *Horizons of Perfection* (Durban: Barkaatur-Raza Publications, 2005), 58.
[129] Imam Ahmad Raza ﷺ, *Hussam al-Haramayn*, tr. Alhaaj Bashir Hussain Nazim, available from http://www.razanw.org/modules/products/item.php?itemid=1.
[130] Imam Ahmad Raza ﷺ, *Hussam al-Haramayn*, tr. Alhaaj Bashir Hussain Nazim, available from http://www.razanw.org/modules/products/item.php?itemid=1.

the unseen. In a fitting and comprehensive response, Imam Ahmed Raza ﷺ addresses the august Ulama of the Holy Cities directly:

> "He (the wretched) believes in the extensive knowledge of his guide Diabolos (Iblees) but forms such an opinion about the Prophet ﷺ, who was taught by Allah that which he did not know and Allah's great grace was upon him [(Holy Quran 4:113)][131]. Then Allah, the Exalted, revealed upon him everything and imparted him the knowledge of firmament and the earth. Allah also taught him the knowledge, which lies in between the East and the West[132] along with the knowledge of the first and the last[133] as proven by the Holy text of numerous traditions. So the Holy text is available for the extensive knowledge of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Is it [i.e. Khalil Ahmed's statement] not a belief in the knowledge of Iblees and denial of the knowledge of Muhammad ﷺ[134]?

A'la Hadrat ﷺ followed the ruling found in *Naseem-ur-Riaz*, namely, "Anyone who says that a certain person is more learned than the Beloved of Allah ﷺ has surely degraded Sayyiduna Rasulullah ﷺ and the ruling in his

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[131] Allah ﷻ said to the Prophet ﷺ: ﴿**And We granted you knowledge of what you knew not, and the bounty of Allah for you has been infinite**﴾ (4:113).

[132] "In Tirmidhi (*hasan sahih*) and Baghawi in *Sharh al-sunna* on the authority of Muadh ibn Jabal: The Prophet ﷺ said, 'My Lord came to me in the best image and asked me over what did the angels of the higher heaven vie, and I said I did not know, so He put His hand between my shoulders, and I felt its coolness in my innermost, and the knowledge of all things between the East and the West came to me,'" see Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, *Enclyclopedia of Islamic Doctrine, Volume Three* (Mountain View: As-Sunna Foundation of America, 1998), 110.

[133] "Last but not least, Bukhari began the book of the Beginning of Creation in his Sahih with the following hadith: Narrated Umar: 'One day the Prophet ﷺ stood up among us for a long period and informed us about the beginning of creation (and talked about everything in detail) until he mentioned how the people of Paradise will enter their places and the people of Hell will enter their places. Some remembered what he had said, and some forgot it" [Bukhari, *Sahih*, Volume 4, Book 54, Number 414]'", see Ibid., 115.

[134] Imam Ahmad Raza ﷺ, *Hussam al-Haramayn*, tr. Alhaaj Bashir Hussain Nazim, available from http://www.razanw.org/modules/products/item.php?itemid=1.

case will be that of one who abuses the Habib[135]." The verdict regarding the punishment for him is death. There is no difference and exception whatsoever, on this matter, and there is a continuous consensus since the times of the Companions[136]. He continues to address the Ulama:

> "Now I exhort you to look at the signs of the seal that Allah put upon them whereby a seer becomes blind and leaving the right path adopts the blindness and believes in the comprehensive knowledge of Diabolos (Iblees). But when there is mention of the knowledge of Muhammad ﷺ he terms it as polytheism whereas polytheism means to set a partner with Allah the Exalted[137]."

When passing the verdict of apostasy against these *four* men, A'la Hadrat ﷺ always referred to the authentic books of Hanafi Fiqh and followed whatever the previous Ulama preferred and whatever they considered to be correct. Those who wish to object are taking exception to the pure Shari'ah. Deobandis attack the great Imam's authority as a scholar and jurist because they cannot openly contravene the Sacred Law. As we shall see, "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir" serves as a prime example of this. Nuh Keller's defense of Khalil Ahmad is addressed in Chapter X: Insidious Points.

The last man, Ashraf Ali Thanwi, is another ardent follower of Rashid Ahmad Gangohi. Thanwi took this diabolical habit of insulting the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to even greater depths. Here is his original statement regarding the Prophet's ﷺ knowledge of the unseen as quoted by Nuh Keller in "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir:"

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[135] A'la Hadrat ﷺ quotes this verdict in *Husam al-Haramayn* and *Tamheedul Iman*. This quote is taken from "Tamheedul Iman" in *Thesis*, 4:115.

[136] Imam Ahmad Raza ﷺ, *Hussam al-Haramayn*, tr. Alhaaj Bashir Hussain Nazim, available from http://www.razanw.org/modules/products/item.php?itemid=1.

[137] Imam Ahmad Raza ﷺ, *Hussam al-Haramayn*, tr. Alhaaj Bashir Hussain Nazim, available from http://www.razanw.org/modules/products/item.php?itemid=1.

> "If it refers to but *some* of the unseen, then how is the Revered One [the Prophet] (Allah bless him and give him peace) uniquely special, when such unseen knowledge is possessed by Zayd and 'Amr [i.e. just anyone], indeed, by every child and madman, and even by all animals and beasts? For every individual knows something that is hidden from another individual, so everyone should be called 'knower of the unseen.'. . . [And] if it refers to *all* of the unseen, such that not one instance of it remains unknown, then this is incorrect because of scriptural and rational proofs (*Hifdh al-iman* (c00), 15)[138]."

Allah ﷻ discloses knowledge of the unseen to His elect servants[139]. Yet Thanwi alleges that everyone "knows something" of the unseen, even the depraved, animals and beasts. He dares to equalize the knowledge of the Prophet ﷺ to "just anyone[140]." O Muslims! Can Zayd and 'Amr see behind their backs while leading the prayer? Anas ؓ narrates that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "O people! I am your Imam. Do not precede me in *ruku* and *sajda* because in addition to seeing what is in front of me I also see what is behind me" (Muslim). Abu Hurayra ؓ similarly relates the Prophet's ﷺ words: "I swear on Allah Almighty, neither your *ruku* is hidden from me nor your *sajda* because I can see you behind my back as well" (Muslim and Bukhari)[141]. Do madmen, animals and breasts know the inner thoughts of the Companions ؓ and the secret conspiracies of the hypocrites like the

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138 Nuh Keller, "Iman, Kufr, and Tafir." Keller uses italic, brackets, and the ellipsis.

139 Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, *Encyclopedia of Islamic Doctrine: The Prophet* ﷺ (Mountain View: As-Sunna Foundation of America Publications, 1998), 3:101.

140 Imam Ahmad Raza ؓ, *Hussam al-Haramayn*, tr. Alhaaj Bashir Hussain Nazim, available from http://www.razanw.org/modules/products/item.php?itemid=1.

141 Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, *Encyclopedia of Islamic Doctrine: The Prophet* ﷺ (Mountain View: As-Sunna Foundation of America Publications, 1998), 3:127.

most knowledgeable of creation ﷺ? In the chapter on the Prophet's ﷺ knowledge of the unseen, *al-Shifa'* states:

> "He ﷺ also told his Companions about their secrets and inward thoughts. He told them about the secrets of the hypocrites and their rejection and what they said about him and the believers, so that one of the hypocrites said to his friend: 'Be quiet! By Allah, if he does not have someone to inform him, the very stones of the plain would inform him[142].'"

Nevertheless, Thanwi claims that there is nothing uniquely special about the Prophet's ﷺ knowledge. To answer this blasphemous passage, A'la Hadrat ؒ poses a rhetorical question in *Husam al-Haramayn*: Have you not seen your Lord; what does He say? He then replies by quoting Ayats from Mecca (3:179) and Medinah (72:26-27)[143]. It is established that Allah ﷻ is **﴾the Knower of the Unseen, and He reveals unto none His secret, save unto every Messenger whom He has chosen﴿ (72:26-27)**. The famous Shafii scholar, Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani ؒ comments on this verse:

> "It follows from this verse that prophets can see some of the Unseen, and so do the saints (*wali*, pl. *awliya*) that follow each particular prophet also, as each takes from his prophet and is gifted (*yukram*) with his knowledge. The difference between the two is that the prophet looks at this knowledge through all kinds of revelation, while the saint does not look upon it except in dreams or through inspiration, and Allah knows best[144]."

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[142] Shaykh Gibril F Haddad, "Book Review of *Taqwiyat al-Iman: Strengthening of the Faith*," available from http://mac.abc.se/home/onesr/d/tqi_e.pdf, 7.
[143] Imam Ahmad Raza ؒ, *Hussam al-Haramayn*, tr. Alhaaj Bashir Hussain Nazim, available from http://www.razanw.org/modules/products/item.php?itemid=1.
[144] Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, *Encyclopedia of Islamic Doctrine: The Prophet* ﷺ (Mountain View: As-Sunna Foundation of America Publications, 1998), 3:108.

Only the elect servants, i.e. Prophets and saints, behold the unseen. The saints' unveiling, or *kashf*, consists of "apprehending beyond the veil of ordinary phenomena, whether by vision or experience, the meanings and realities, that pertain to the unseen[145]." Thanwi **degraded** the unseen to "something that is hidden from another individual." Put differently, a madman knows something about madness and a dog, a pig, or a donkey knows something that is hidden from the others mentioned! The passage in *Hifdh al-iman* contradicts the Qur'an and Sunnah! For Allah, the Exalted, says: ﴾**Nor will He disclose to you the secrets of the Unseen, but He chooses of His Apostles whom He pleases**﴿ **(3:179)**. Knowledge of the unseen is a privilege of Prophethood! Ashraf Ali Thanwi has glibly forsaken the Quran and faith, when he failed to distinguish between a Prophet and an animal[146]. Had the Deobandi Shaykh sincerely wanted to make a distinction between Allah's knowledge of the unseen and that bestowed upon a man, he might have said:

> "It would indeed be disbelief if someone is presumed to know even a small unseen detail without Allah ﷻ imparting this knowledge to him. According to the majority of Islamic Scholars, it would be a form of disbelief to think that the knowledge of a created individual is equal to the total Knowledge of Allah ﷻ. But the knowledge about our Universe from the first day of creation to the last Day of Judgment is a very small part of Allah's ﷻ total Knowledge. It is like a thousandth or millionth part of a drop of water in comparison to the water of millions and billions of oceans. This too, in reality, is of no comparison[147]."

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[145] Ibid., 3:132.
[146] Imam Ahmad Raza ؓ, *Hussam al-Haramayn*, tr. Alhaaj Bashir Hussain Nazim, available from http://www.razanw.org/modules/products/item.php?itemid=1.
[147] *Thesis*, 4:96.

If Thanwi was A'la Hadrat ﷺ, then he would praise the Revered One ﷺ by adding: **"It would be right to say that the knowledge of Sayyiduna Rasulullah ﷺ is so vast and extensive that the knowledge of this universe is but a tiny part of our Nabi's ﷺ knowledge[148]."** But Thanwi intended to diminish the glory and honor of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ by comparing his blessed knowledge to the mentally ill, children, animals and beasts. The passage in his book reeks of kufr. It was, therefore, *rightly perceived* as willful disrespect and contempt for the Habib ﷺ! In Chapter IX: Denial of Disbelief we will examine Keller's defense of Thanwi's statement.

***Al-Mo'tamad Al-Mustanad* (The Reliable Proofs)**

Imam Ahmad Raza ﷺ wrote the fatwa of kufr in light of the Quran and Sunnah. He let the Deobandi Shaykhs own *verbatim* statements of blasphemy bear testimony against them. These *four* men denied the necessities of the religion. They intentionally choose words that *were* offensive and deliberately insulting to Allah's Beloved Prophet ﷺ. But instead of repenting they justified their wickedness, and exonerated themselves from the charge of kufr (unbelief).

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[148] *Thesis*, 4:96.

THE JUSTIFICATION

Nuh Keller contends that the fatwa of kufr against the Deobandis was not legally valid in the Hanafi school for the two reasons named by Imam Haskafi ﷺ, namely, "A fatwa may not be given of the unbelief of a Muslim whose words are interpretable as having a valid meaning, or about the unbelief of which there is a difference of scholarly opinion, even if weak (Radd al-muhtar, 3.289)."

"Iman, Kufr, and Takfir" is built upon the above principle[149]. First, Keller asserts that their words "can be construed as making a distinction, **however crudely**, between Allah's knowledge of the 'absolute unseen' and man's knowledge of the 'relative unseen.'" Khalil Ahmad and Thanwi explicitly mentioned this in defense of themselves, but the passage in *Baraheen-e-Qatiah* denies a man's knowledge of the unseen outright by declaring it "*shirk*." Keller himself admits this,

> "it is difficult to see how the attribute of knowledge that Khalil Ahmad ascribes to Satan and the Angel of Death should become '*shirk*' when affirmed of the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace): either it is a divine attribute that is *shirk* to ascribe to any creature, or it is not[150]."

Khalil Ahmad's statement defies logic; his mind was deceived into seeing error as truth.

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[149] Shaykh Faizan ul-Mustafa addresses the correct view regarding explicit (*sarih*) kufr and the value of intention, as well as the fallacy of considering *takfir* invalid according to the Hanafi school in his scholarly treatise "A Just Response to the Biased Author." This article is available from www.gatewaytomedia.com, 34-44.

[150] Nuh Keller, "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir."

It might be fairly stated that Thanwi was attempting to make this distinction in *Hifzul Iman,* but the relative unseen (al-ghayb al-nisbi) is based on falsity. It is an error in fact *due to* an erroneous relation of terms. Nuh Keller defines the "relative unseen" in the section of his essay entitled *The Imputed Insult.* He writes: "The relative unseen (al-ghayb al-nisbi) is a fact of everyday life, and is merely that each individual knows things others are unaware of, hence 'unseen' in relation to them[151]." This mundane definition, while being lenient toward the Deobandi Shaykhs, is completely inaccurate and far removed from intent of the words, "al-ghayb." Thanwi is using a pseudo-technical term to conceal his denial of the Prophet's ﷺ knowledge of the unseen ('ilm al-ghayb).

To add insult to serious injury, the Deobandis *fallacious* distinction was **"crudely"** written, which is why Thanwi openly asked: "how is the Revered One [the Prophet] (Allah bless him and give him peace) uniquely special, when such unseen knowledge is possessed by Zayd and 'Amr [i.e. just anyone], indeed, by every child and madman, and even by all animals and beasts?" As stated in the pervious chapter, a valid meaning **cannot** entail insult to Sayyiduna Rasulullah ﷺ because disrespecting the Prophet is kufr by scholarly consensus (Ijma'a). Perhaps this is why Nuh Keller turns to the position of the Shafii Imam Subki ؓ. He insists that:

> "one must give 'due consideration to the intention behind that which gives offense' (*al-Sayf al-maslul* (c00), 135)- that is, *even when offense has been given*. In this instance, 'due consideration' means that if it is possible that Deobandi scholars intended something besides insult to the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace)- for example, a heated rebuttal of supposed innovation (bid'a)- this legally prevents the judgment of kufr against them."

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[151] Ibid.

In the context of the above quote and reference to Taqi al-Din al-Subki's *al-Sayf al-maslul,* it must be understood that the offense in question in the examples given by the great Shafii Imam, is never intended. Such anecdotes do not even resemble blasphemy **as the requisite degree of disrespect (for a blasphemous offense) is not evident**. Imam Subki himself illustrates this point by relating an anecdote about the Blessed Companions ﷺ who sat too long at the marriage feast of Sayyida Zaynab ﷺ and the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ[152]! This incident can be seen in Chapter Seven: Sahih Hadith on page 93. We should also take note that after this incident, the following Quranic verse was revealed:

> **﴾O ye who believe! Enter not the Prophet's houses- until leave is given you- for a meal, (and then) not (so early as) to wait for its preparation: but when ye are invited, enter; and when ye have taken your meal, disperse, without seeking familiar talk﴿ (33:53).**

The question now arises; did the Blessed Companions ﷺ do the same after the revelation of the above Divine Verse? **No.** The Deobandi Shaykhs, however, disregarded categorical verses and after being informed about the truth, they continued as before, until at last they were adjudged non-Muslims. Their passages of disbelief continue to be industriously circulated to the present day.

It seems ironic that a "specialist in Islamic Law" fails to notice – either by design or negligence – that an abstruse intention **cannot** negate the apparent one, which is easily seen and commonly understood[153]. Nor will the Shafii

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[152] Shaykh Faizan ul-Mustafa addresses the hadiths on giving offense in his scholarly treatise "A Just Response to the Biased Author;" available from www.gatewaytomedia.com, 72-74.

[153] Shaykh Faizan ul-Mustafa addresses the correct view regarding explicit (*sarih*) kufr and the value of intention in his scholarly treatise "A Just Response to the Biased Author:

school condone insult to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ under any pretext, and Imam Subki ؓ in his *al-Sayf al-maslul ‘ala man sabba al-Rasul* [The Naked Sword upon the Person who Insults the Messenger ﷺ] concurs[154]! Eveyone (including Keller) confirms that the Deobandi Shaykhs said exactly what Imam Ahmed Raza ؓ understood, namely, that such vastness of knowledge is established for Satan (the vilest creature in existence) through scriptural texts, yet to affirm such knowledge for the Best of Creation ﷺ is to commit an act of *shirk*[155]; and if that wasn’t bad enough, Thawni said that the knowledge of our Master Muhammad ﷺ is *the same in kind* as that possessed by all animals and beasts. His despicable assertion has been italicised for distinction. There is also consensus (past and present) that “such words were **indefensible** breaches of proper respect,” as Keller himself points out. To summarize, their malicious intention was too clear to misunderstand, and constitutes plain and open disbelief.

If an Islamic scholar attempts a far-fetched interpretation of Iman it will contradict the Qur’an and Sunnah, whilst violating scholarly consensus (Ijma’a)! This explains why Keller uses literary manipulation to distort what

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Reflecting the True Meaning of ‘Iman, Kufr, and Takfir,’” available from www.gatewaytomedia.com, 34-38.

[154] Shaykh Faizan ul-Mustafa quotes Imam Subki’s *al-Sayf al-maslul* at length to prove that the ruling of infidelity applies to the outward (Ibid., 60-67). Likewise, Shaykh Muhammed Monawwar Ateeq in his *Al-Taqyeed li-Dhabit al-Subki fi al-Takfir* reveals that the rule of Subki on the “intention of the offender” has been distorted by Shaykh Nuh Ha Mim Keller in “Iman, Kufr and Takfir” due to three primary reasons: (a) little knowledge about the different levels of entailment (*luzum*) and their grades of reliability in the Islamic law, (b) decontextualisation of the passage in which Subki presents the rule and (c) lack of study on the topic of takfir as a whole and hence confusion about matters in which there is ijma. This short yet replete critique is available at http://scholarsink.wordpress.com/2010/06/.

[155] Here is Hamza Karamali’s English translation of Khalil Ahmad Saharanpuri’s *al-Barahin al-qati‘a* as quoted by Nuh Keller in his apologetic: “Such vastness [of knowledge] is established for Satan and the Angel of Death through scriptural texts. Through what decisive scriptural text has the Pride of the World’s vastness of knowledge been established, that one should affirm an act of *shirk* by rejecting **all** scriptural texts?” (*al-Barahin* (c00), 55)[155]. Bold is the compiler’s emphasis. Did Imam Ahmed Raza ؓ impute the insult? No, absolutely not!

is readily seen in their books. It also enables him to give their remarks *a semblance* of validity, whilst misrepresenting the prosecution (Imam Ahmed Raza) and *Husam al-Haramayn*. All of this becomes *painfully* evident in the chapters pertaining to Thanwi, Khalil Ahmad, and Gangohi (9-11). Since the Deobandis and their apologists cannot contravene the Sacred Law directly they attack Imam Ahmed Raza's authority as a scholar and jurist. Keller's justification is an argument to the man; it begs the question:

- ❖ How could an august scholar in Hanafi Fiqh, such as A'la Hadrat ignore the two reasons named by Imam Haskafi?

Nuh Keller's answer to this question is his allegation that Imam Ahmed Raza was ignorant of Imam Subki's position. He writes, "Knowledge of the above principle could have probably prevented much of the 'fatwa wars' that took place around the turn of the last century in India between Hanafi Muslims of the Barelwi and Deobandi schools[156]."

First & Foremost

The great Mujaddid had encyclopedic knowledge of the Hanafi school, in general, and Imam Haskafi, in particular. A'la Hadrat cites Imam Haskafi's *al-Durr al-mukhtar* in *Husam al-Haramayn* and *Tamheedul-Iman* as proof that speaking ill of Sayyiduna Rasulullah ﷺ is in itself disbelief. This is the opinion of the great Hanafi Fuqaha of distinction[157], and even one thousand Imams cannot and would not forgive a person who talks ill of the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ [158].

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156 Nuh Keller, "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir."

157 Namely, Imam Bazari, Imam Ibnul Hummam, 'Allama Maula Khasrau, author of *Dar-Radd-e-Gharur*; Allama Zain bin Najim, author of *Bahrar Raiq* and *Ishbak Wan-Nazair*; 'Allama Umar bin Najim, author of *Naharul Faiq*; Allama Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad bin 'Abdullah Ghazi, author of *Tanwir al-Absar*; 'Allama Khairuddin Ramli, author of Fatawa Khairiyya; 'Allama Shaykh-Zada, author of *Majm 'a-ul-Ankar*; 'Allama Mudaqqaq Muhammad bin Ali Haskafi, author of *Durr-e-Mukhtar*.

158 *Thesis*, 4:107.

As for A'la Hadrat's رضي الله عنه knowledge of the Shafii school, know that during his first Hajj (1295 A.H./1876 C.E.) he was recognized by top-ranking Shafii scholars like: **Husain bin Saleh** رضي الله عنه, the Imam, who gave him "a certificate in the six collections of hadith, as well as one in the Qadiri order, signing it with his own hand;" and **Sayyid Ahmad Dahlan** رضي الله عنه, the Mufti of the Shafii law school in Mecca, who gave him a certificate (sanad) in hadith, tafsir, fiqh, and usul-e fiqh (principles of jurisprudence)[159]. Moreover, Imam Ahmed Raza رضي الله عنه cites Imam Subki رضي الله عنه as one of the "great Jurists of Islam" in his treatise "The Validity of Saying Ya Rasulallah ﷺ,[160]" as well as in *Beacons of Hope*[161] among countless other works. Now the reader can judge if A'la Hadrat رضي الله عنه had comprehensive knowledge of the above principle in question from his own words:

> "We find this [principle] in ***Fatawa Khulasah, Jame'h al-Fusulin, Muhit*** and ***Fatawa 'Alamgiriyyah***:
>
> '<u>If an issue has many factors or aspects that demands condemnation (Takfir) and one aspect prohibits condemnation, the Mufti and Qadi has to incline towards that one aspect of prohibition and he is not to issue a decree of Kufr against such a person and he be given the doubt of having good Faith in Islam</u>. Then, if the intention of the one who utters those words confirms to the aspect that prohibits condemnation, he will be regarded as a Muslim, and if it is contrary to that then the Mufti attempts to interpret his statement from that angle which does

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[159] Usha Sanyal, *Ahmad Riza Khan Barelwi: In the Path of the Prophet*, (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005), 64.

[160] Imam Ahmad Raza رضي الله عنه, "The Validity of Saying Ya Rasulallah ﷺ," in *Thesis of Imam Ahmad Raza* (Durban: Imam Ahmad Raza Academy, 2005), tr. Shaykh 'Abd al-Hadi al-Qadiri, 3:6.

[161] Imam Ahmad Raza رضي الله عنه, *BEACONS OF HOPE*, tr. Shaykh 'Abd al-Hadi al-Qadiri, available from http://www.razanw.org/modules/products/item.php?itemid=4.

> not necessitate (Takfir) condemnation [it] will be futile in his case[162].'"

Keller is acting like the mufti who attempts to interpret a Muslim's statement from the angle that does not necessitate condemnation, even though, the intention goes towards disbelief. The scholars of Islam state that his verdict is futile in their case!

> "In the same way it can be seen [in the following books of Fiqh like] ***Fatawa Bazazia, Baher-ur-Raiq, Majm 'a-ul-Anhar*** and ***Hadiqah, Hidayah***. ***Tatar Khaniyyah, Bahr, Sal-al-Hisam*** and ***Tanbih-ul-Walat***, etc. also show [this principle] as follows:
>
> 'A person will not be condemned as Kafir in [a] case involving possibilities because condemning [someone] as [a] Kafir is the ultimate in punishment which demands extreme case in crime and in [a] doubtful case there is no case of final punishment.'
>
> ***Bahrur-Raiq, Tanvir-ul-Absar, Hadiqah Nadiyyah, Tanbihul-Walat*** and ***Sal-ul-Hisam***, etc. shown as under:
>
> 'A Muslim will not be condemned as Kafir if there is a possibility of interpreting his statement adjoining good intentions[163].'"

Here is the principle of enjoing a good intention; it is found in numerous books of Fiqh because it is a basic principle of jurisprudence that A'la Hadrat ﷺ knew by heart. He also cites this principle in *Beacons of Hope* (written in 1311 A.H./1890 C.E.), which means he had knowledge of it well before he issued the verdict of apostasy! The august Mujaddid ﷺ writes:

[162] *Thesis*, 4:117.
[163] *Thesis*, 4:117-118.

> "See that there are a number of possibilities involved in one word… This search for truth has also made another point clear. In some Islamic Fatawa like ***Fatawa Qadi Khan***, etc. it is recorded that a person who gives the Names of Allah ﷻ and His Prophet ﷺ as witnesses to a marriage contract, or says that the souls of spiritual guides are present and omniscient, or says that the angles possess knowledge of the unseen or says '*I* possess the knowledge of the unseen' is a disbeliever. It implies a declaration of disbelief on account of his personal knowledge, although in these statements there are many possibilities of Islamic interpretation. Here [in an example where Zayd says, '*Amar possesses knowledge of the unseen definitely*.'] it is not clearly stated that the knowledge of the unseen is definite[164] and the term knowledge is used in good faith. If we go into further possibilities, there will be 42 rather than 21 possibilities. Many of these will be out of the range of disbelief, because assertions of the knowledge of the unseen in good faith[165] are not disbelief[166]."

Assuredly, Imam Ahmed Raza ﷺ was a master of both schools and one of those *rightly* considered a Reviver (*Mujaddid*) of the 14th Islamic Century. He was given this title by scholars of the Arab world and the Subcontinent! Nuh Keller's argument sounds convincing to others because they are ignorant of the facts that stand against it. A'la Hadrat had **comprehensive**

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164 "Definitely" meaning: "Amar gets Knowledge about the Unseen matters through Sayyiduna Rasulullah ﷺ by the eye or by the ear or by intuition from Allah Almighty ﷻ. This possibility is purely Islamic" (*Thesis*, 4:115).

165 *Good faith* encompasses a sincere belief or motive without *any* malice**.** For instance, there is nothing malicious about Zayd's assertion in the above quote. However, the same **cannot** be said for the statements made by the Deobandi Shaykhs because "Khalil Ahmad's and Ashraf 'Ali Thanwi's comparisons of the Prophet's knowledge (Allah bless him and give him peace) *were* offensive in their wording," as Keller himself admits.

166 *Thesis*, 4:118-119.

knowledge of the above principle and the great Jurists of Islam. Consequentially, he **did not** ignore this crucial legal distinction in his fatwa of kufr. This baseless accusation must be rejected. Can one imagine a more vicious personal attack than to accuse a *faqih* of being ignorant of usul-e fiqh (principles of jurisprudence)? Keller has committed slander against a great personality, who was recognized as a scholar-saint. Unfortunately, he has convincingly tried to overturn fourteen hundred years of Islamic scholarship. In this respect, he should recall the fourteenth eulogy from *Madinah Munawwarh* by the Hanafite Teacher in the Mosque of the Prophet ﷺ, Al-Shaikh Abdul Qadir Tawfiq al-Shalbi Tarabulasi ﷺ that wrote:

> "Our ancestral illustrious Ulama did not issue any juristic verdict regarding the infidelity of these people without walking on the path of light and resplendence. They just believed in 'cutting arguments' of great religious scholars without intense application, conjectures and intelligence, keeping in view the severity of day on which the eyes would be deprived of the sight[167]."

Before answering the question: Why have the Islamic scholars issued a verdict of disbelief when so many Islamic interpretations are possible? First, see if Imam Ahle Sunnat ﷺ gave due consideration to the intention behind the offense.

[167] Imam Ahmad Raza ﷺ, *Hussam al-Haramayn*, tr. Alhaaj Bashir Hussain Nazim, available from http://www.razanw.org/modules/products/item.php?itemid=1.

DUE CONSIDERATION

Nuh Keller accuses A'la Hadrat of not giving due consideration to "the intention behind the offense" and "the emotions aroused" in emulation of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, and went so far as to compare these *four* men with the Ansar, Hadrat Aishah Siddiqah, and a coarse desert bedouin.

In Chapter Two: A Brief History we saw how the Deobandis incorporated many of Ismail Dihlawi's new beliefs and doctrines into their school of thought. The Wahhabi Reformation of India was actually refuted and **condemned**[168] during the lifetime of its author, Ismail Dihlawi. Here are a few influential Sunni personalities who took part in this noble Jihad to protect the creed of the Saved Group:

1. Mawlānā Makhsoos Ullah son of Shah Rafiuddin Dihlawi,
2. Mawlānā Muhammad Musa son of Shah Rafiuddin Dihlawi,
3. **Mawlānā Fazle Haq Khairabadi** (student of Shah Abdul Aziz Muhaddith Dihlawi),
4. Mufti Sadruddin Aazurdah (student of Shah Abdul Aziz Muhaddith Dihlawi),
5. Muhammad Fazle Rasool Uthmani Badayuni,
6. Mawlānā Ahmad Saeed Naqshbandi Dihlawi,
7. Mawlānā Rasheeduddin Dihlawi,
8. Mawlānā Khairuddin Dihlawi,
9. Hakeem Sadiq Ali Khan Dihlawi (grandfather of Masih-ul-Mulk Hakeem Ajmal Khan),

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[168] In circa 1822 C.E., Mawlana Fazle Haq Khairabadī (d. 1861) published the fatwa of unbelief (*kufr*) in ***Tahqeeq al-Fatwa fi Ibtal al-Taghwa*** against Ismail Dihlawi and his book *Taqwiyat al-Iman*. It was signed by **seventeen** leading scholars of *Ahle Sunnat wal Jama'at.* The compiler wishes to thank Shabnam Jilani for verifying the content of this Urdu text. A scan of this fatwa is available at http://www.falaah.co.uk/refutation/wahabi/94-fatwa-upon-ismail-dehalvi-.html.

10. Mawlānā Sayyid Ashraf Ali Gulshan Abadi رضي الله عنه,
11. Mawlānā Mukhlis-ur-Rahman Chatgami رضي الله عنه,
12. Mawlānā Qalandar Ali Zubairi Panipati رضي الله عنه,
13. Mawlānā Munawwaruddin رضي الله عنه (a classmate of Ismail Dihlawi),

and many others, may Allah be pleased with them all[169].

The Deobandi Shaykhs inaugurated the "fatwa wars" by resurrecting the disagreements of that era and refusing to repent. Imam Ahmed Raza رضي الله عنه had been investigating the scholars of Deoband for nineteen years. He adhered to the Prophetic command that a Muslim should not be labeled as a disbeliever, unless his disbelief becomes more apparent than the sun and there remains no chance of his continuing to stay within the fold of Islam. He did not call the Deobandis disbelievers despite recording 70 charges of kufr with proof against each prominent scholar. In fact, he gave 78 reasons justifying their disbelief. Why? Because he did not know the *exact* insulting words which they used against Allah عزوجل and His Habib ﷺ [170]. A'la Hadrat رضي الله عنه did not issue his verdict on the basis of hearsay. He wrote *Al-Mo'tamad Al-Mustanad* (the fatwa of kufr) only after incontestable Shari'ah proof was obtained!

But for some vague reason, Nuh Keller indirectly accuses the followers of Imam Ahmed Raza رضي الله عنه of being "enamored" with the fallacy of hearsay evidence. "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir" begins with this fallacy in order to set-up Keller's acquittal of the Deobandi Shaykhs. In the section of his essay entitled THE FALLACY OF HEARSAY EVIDENCE, he writes:

> "As for judging the belief or unbelief of a particular historical individual of the past who ostensibly died as a Muslim, it is no

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[169] Mawlana Yaseen Akhtar Misbahi, *AHLU'S SUNNAH WA'L JAMA'AH AN INTRODUCTION*, tr. Muhammad Aqdas, accessed on 13 September 2009; available from http://www.freewebs.com/barelwi/IntroToAhlusSunnah.pdf, 5.
[170] *Thesis*, 4:132-133.

> one's responsibility, since the dead no longer stand in our dock. As previously noted, such judgements are only given by the qadi[171] in view of this-worldly rulings and consequences, which are immaterial to those now remanded by death to a higher court."

This is well and good, unless of course, the individual in question was declared a Murtadd (apostate) by the qadi for the protection and preservation of the Ummah. If this individual bequeaths a legacy of kufr through his Madrasa and writings, then Muslims are obliged to warn others about him by referring to the said fatwa. There have been many apostates who "ostensibly" died Muslims, but their death **did not** entail the demise of their sect, school, or teaching! The followers of that qadi are disseminating facts, not fiction. They are, therefore, enamored with Truth- not falsehood. Those following the *maslak* of A'la Hadrat ﷻ[172] are undertaking a religious service and protecting the Ummah from misguidance and disbelief! To charge the *Ahle Sunnat* with "the fallacy of hearsay evidence" is strange indeed especially since Nuh Keller quotes their printed works! He cannot dismiss the evidence so he tampers with the meaning by denying what was plainly expressed. Then Keller has the nerve to accuse Imam Ahmed Raza ﷻ of commiting "the fallacy of imputed intentionality."

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[171] Shaykh Faizan ul-Mustafa addresses the qadi issue in his scholarly treatise "A Just Response to the Biased Author: Reflecting the True Meaning of 'Iman, Kufr, and Takfir.'" The Barelwi Alim quotes authentic books of Fiqh like *al-Hadiqah al-Nadiyyah*. He gives the original Arabic along with an English translation and commentary to refute Keller. It must be understood that his refutation is written at the highest level of scholarship; careful reading is therefore advantageous. This essay is available from www.gatewaytomedia.com, 48-50, and 57-59.

[172] *Maslak-e-Alahazrat*: School of thought or way of the *Ahle Sunnat wal Jama'at*. This way leads to a real understanding of the status of the noble Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, as capsulized in the following lines by A'la Hadrat ﷻ: "This is the Glory and Jalwa [splendor] of ALLAH from head to feet. This is such a man that no man is like him" (See: http://www.taajushshariah.com/Fatawa/maslak.html).

Keller might have remained silent on this issue, but instead he took it upon himself to revive their heretical beliefs in a desparate attempt to protect *their* Iman. But what about the Iman of all those Muslims who come under the influence of their aberrant teachings? He is also forgetting that bad beliefs can be coupled with good actions. "A particular historical individual" can die justifying the wrong beliefs, even though "ostensibly" he was a pious Muslim. The living must differentiate between Iman and Kufr in order to safeguard our *Akhirah* (afterlife)!

Hanafi Barelwis only remind and warn the Ummah about these *four* men because their followers refuse to let their Wahhabi ideology die with them! In *Tamheedul Iman*, A'la Hadrat ﷺ defends himself proving that he was a careful, caution and exceedingly patient Islamic scholar. Imam Ahmed Raza ﷺ is speaking in the second person when he writes:

> "He [A'la Hadrat] had no anger against them. He had no joint property with them, which may have given rise to the present disagreement.
>
> The relationship amongst the Muslims depends upon loving or hating [for the sake of] Allah ﷻ and His Prophet ﷺ. As long as these insolent people had not used insulting words or this servant of Allah ﷻ had not seen or heard these insulting words against Allah ﷻ and His Prophet ﷺ he used to respect their lip-service to Islam. He used utmost care and did not join those scholars who argued that these insolent people deserved to be called disbelievers.
>
> But this servant of Allah ﷻ joined those scholars who insisted that one should use great care in calling a Muslim a disbeliever. But when he saw with his own eyes insulting words used against Allah Almighty ﷻ and Nabi Rasulullah ﷺ and he had

> become convinced that these insolent people have failed to observe the essential principles of Islam… It was necessary to save my own faith and the faith of my Muslim brothers and the Islamic community. Hence, a declaration of disbelief was given and published.[173]"

Look at the number of opportunites the great Mujaddid ﷺ exteneded to Rashid Ahmad Gangohi. A'la Hadrat ﷺ wrote:

> "This unholy verdict relating to Allah ﷻ being a liar was printed 18 years ago together with the refutation in Rabi-ul Akhir, 1308 AH [1880 C.E.] in the magazine *Sianat-un-Nas* in Hadiqah-tul-'Ulum Press, Meerut. Later on, in 1318 AH [1900 C.E.] a detailed refutation of this verdict was printed in Gulzar-e-Hasnie Press, Bombay. Still later, in 1320 AH [1902 C.E.], a very comprehensive refutation of this verdict was printed by Tuhfa-e-Hanafiyyah Press at Patna Azimabad.
>
> ***N.B.*** The author of this unholy verdict died in Jamad-al-Akhir 1323 AH. [1905 C.E.] He maintained complete silence till his death. He neither said that it was not his verdict nor explained that he did not mean to say what scholars of *Ahl-e-Sunnat* had understood. He could have clarified what he actually meant to say[174]."

Imam Ahmed Raza ﷺ personally sent Rashid Ahmad Gangohi a copy of *Subhan-us-Subbooh*[175] through registered mail. He quotes many texts from the Imams of *Kalam*[176] and *Tafsir*[177], among other authorities stating

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[173] *Thesis*, 4:132-134.
[174] Ibid., 4:123-124.
[175] The full title is *Subhan-us-Subbooh An Aibay Kizbe Maqbooh* (Glorified be the Holy One, Who is free from the Abominable Fault of Lie).
[176] *Kalam*: speculative theology.

Consensus that lying is impossibile for Allah ﷻ. By convincing arguments this book proves that Ismail Dihlawi deserves to be called a disbeliever, yet on page 90 it has been written that in the interest of care and caution the scholars should not call him a disbeliever[178]. In *Subban-us-Subboh*, A'la Hadrat ؓ said that he **did not** want to label anyone a disbeliever, despite recording 78 reasons for their exposure to disbelief (see page 80, Anwar-e-Muhammadi Press, Lucknow)[179]! In *Husam al-Haramayn*, A'la Hadrat ؓ remarked:

> "I sent this [*Subhan-us-Subbooh*] to him through registered mail, which has been received by him, and receipt thereof has been received from him. **Eleven years have elapsed but no reply has been written**. The opponents are giving information for the last three years that reply shall be written or has been written and sent for printing. But God does not show [the] right path to deceivers and dishonest people. They, therefore, neither stood fast nor were able to seek help from anyone. Now Allah has made their eyes blind whose insight had already been made blind. I still expect reply, but will a dead body come for disputation from [the] grave?[180]"

In *Tamheedul Iman*, the august Mujaddid ؓ comments about Gangohi's silence. He writes:

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177 *Tafsir*: Qur'anic exegesis.

178 At the time there was reason to believe that Dihlawi had in fact repented from his heretical stance before death. Therefore, Ala Hadrat ؓ mentioned that the words of Ismail Dihlawi are *kufr* and possesses the meaning of *kufr*, but he was cautious in calling him a *kafir* (refer to the live session with Mufti Muhammad Akhtar Raza Qadri Azhari on February 14, 2010 available at http://karewww.jamiaturraza.com/live/). This incident further underlines the remarkable care and caution exercised by Imam Ahmed Raza ؓ in such matters serving as a clear contradiction of Keller's baseless claims.

179 *Thesis*, 4:131.

180 Imam Ahmad Raza ؓ, *Hussam al-Haramayn*, tr. Alhaaj Bashir Hussain Nazim, available from http://www.razanw.org/modules/products/item.php?itemid=1.

> "It was not an insignificant matter, which he could have ignored. It was a very serious matter of disbelief. If Zayd is alive and well, a sealed and signed verdict is openly printed under his name, he is described as a disbeliever; how can he afford to ignore it? Suppose he does so for a number of years his books are reprinted, others refute them branding Zayd as a disbeliever, and he lives silently for 15 years. Can a sane man conclude that he wanted to deny or did not mean it? The other insolent people, who are alive even today, are silent on the subject. They can neither disown their printed books nor can they invent any other meaning for their words of insult[181]."

Not only did A'la Hadrat ﷺ personally write to Rashid Ahmad Gangohi, but he published his refutations to *imkan al-kadhib* or the possibility of lying (on the part of Allah Most Hight!) on several occasions in major publications. The Deobandis had been under investigation for a long time. Many *Ahle Sunnat* scholars refuted their books[182] giving them ample time to deny or retract their passages of kufr. Instead Gangohi and Nanotwi sent their deviant publications for reprinting[183], while Khalil Ahmad and Thanwi justified their disbelief. The Deobandi Shaykhs should have given due consideration to the rights of Allah ﷻ and His Habib ﷺ. So much for the baseless accusations of Nuh Keller against Imam Ahmed Raza ﷺ, the truth is self-evident!

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[181] *Thesis,* 4:124.

[182] Mawlana Yaseen Akhtar Misbahi, *AHLU'S SUNNAH WA'L JAMA'AH AN INTRODUCTION*, tr. Muhammad Aqdas, accessed on 13 September 2009; available from http://www.freewebs.com/barelwi/IntroToAhlusSunnah.pdf, 10-11.

[183] According to Metcalf, *Tahzeerun Nas* was "reprinted many times[183]." The Deobandi Shaykh disregarded no fewer than 9 refutations written by the Barewli group of Ulama (*Islamic Revival in British India,* 212).

SAHIH HADITH

Nuh Keller presents *Sahih Ahadith* as proof to substantiate his corrupt opinion, when the same proof rejects his claim. The *Hadith Shareef* is resplendent with lessons for the Believers, just look at the contrast between these *four* men and the Companions ﷺ.

Comparison to the Ansar ﷺ

Nuh Keller defends these *four* men by citing an example, in which, some of the Ansar ﷺ allegedly "spoke words as offensive to the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) as any could be[184]." He is relating a famous hadith in *Sahih Bukhari* that Anas bin Malik ﷺ narrated:

> "When Allah favored His Apostle with the properties of Hawazin tribe as Fai (booty), he started giving to some Quarries men even up to one-hundred camels each, whereupon some Ansari men said about Allah's Apostle, 'May Allah forgive His Apostle! He is giving to (men of) Quraish and leaves us, in spite of the fact that our swords are still dropping blood (of the infidels)'" (Volume 4, Book 53: One-fifth of Booty to the Cause of Allah, Number 375).

After relating this incident, Keller imputes his own commentary by asserting:

> "Yet, because they [the Ansar] did not intend to thereby insult or demean him—for their words rather proceeded from natural human distress at being left out while others took the spoils—the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace)

[184] Nuh Keller, "Iman, Kufr, and Tafir."

> did not charge them with unbelief or even with sin, as would have been obligatory if it had been. He merely told them why he did what he did, and of the eternal reward they would receive. **The insult and offense offered thereby to the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was plain**, but without legal consequences because it was unintentional[185]."

This *Sahih Hadith* must be understood in light of the *Seerah*[186], which shows the spiritual state of the Ansar ﷺ when they answered the Prophet's ﷺ question, "Won't you be pleased to see people go with fortune, while you return with Allah's Apostle to your houses? By Allah, what you will return with is better than what they are returning with." (*Sahih Bukhari*, Volume 4, Book 53, Number 375). This was their response:

> "**They wept until their beards were wet with tears**, and with one voice they said: 'We are well content with the Messenger of God as our portion and our lot.'[187]"

This is the love that originates from belief. Imam al-Shaykh Mulla 'Ali al-Qari ؓ explains, "this kind of love is generated in the hearts of true believers, as a direct result of understanding the Prophet's ﷺ excellence, virtues, his favors upon the whole of humanity, his affection on the entire

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[185] Nuh Keller, "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir." Underline and bold is the compiler's emphasis. **Nota Bene:** The reaction of the other Blessed Companions ؓ would have been *markedly* different if the insult and offense offered to the Prophet ﷺ was **"plain."** This is beautifully illustrated in Appendix 1: The Kharijites, in which, a disrespectful person *directly* confronted the Messenger of Allah ﷺ during the distribution of booty after the Battle of Hunain. He objected and said: "I don't find justice in your distribution because some persons are getting more while others less." Upon hearing this absurd remark, Sayyidunā 'Umar al-Farūq ؓ was outraged. He drew his sword and said, "Ya Rasūlallah ﷺ! Grant me permission to behead this Munāfiq (hypocrite)." Obviously the Ansari men ؓ never intended to offend the Prophet ﷺ, and even the requiste degree of disrespect (for a blasphemous offense) was not evident.

[186] Life of the Prophet ﷺ

[187] Martin Lings, *Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources* (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 1987), 312.

creation and so on. The demand of this love which originates from belief, is that the devotee of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ gives precedence and superiority of his beloved's desires upon everything else even upon his own desires" (*Mirqat sharh Mishkat*, 1:64)[188]. Nuh Keller turns a blind eye to the fact that loving the Prophet ﷺ is of paramount importance in this case. He also neglects to mention that the Habib ﷺ was fully aware of their inward state. Shaykh Faizan ul-Mustafa elucidates this reality:

> "The Speciality of the Noble Prophet (may Allah give him peace and blessings) in respect of having the specialties of all Messengers should be evident, and even Imam Subki pointed to the same. The answer [to a question raised by the Shafii Imam in his *al-Saif al-Maslool*[189]] is explained in this manner: **The Ummah is commanded to act according to the obvious and thus they mustn't have a look to intended or unintended.** And the Noble Prophet (may Allah give him peace and blessings) certainly has ruled at many places according to the obvious and also has ruled in accordance to the Shariah of Khizr (شريعة الخضر) i.e. he ruled many times regarding the intrinsic and sometimes acted on both, the obvious and the intrinsic (Zaahir and Baatin)… Hence it becomes evident that it is a special authority Allah has given the Noble Prophet (may

[188] Imam al-Shaykh Mulla 'Ali al-Qari ؓ is commenting on the Prophet's ﷺ saying, "None of you is a believer till I am dearer to him than his child, his father and the whole of mankind" (Bukhari, Muslim). He describes two kinds of love in his *Mirqat sharh Mishkat*, the first is rational and the second originates from belief.

[189] Imam Subki ؓ raises a question about Mistah ؓ and the best of Muslims, who were present when the hypocrites spoke ill of Hadrat A'ishah ؓ. Shaykh Faizan ul-Mustafa is commenting on the Shafii Imam's reply. He inquires: "what is the reason that the Noble Prophet ﷺ never treated Mistah etc. as he treated Abdullah Ibn Ubay?" This is also the answer to the respectful Ansar ؓ and the incident with the course desert bedouin.

Allah give him peace and blessings) to act on the intrinsic whenever he chooses as he is the Legislator[190]."

The best generation immediately felt remorse for having their grievance brought to the attention of Allah's Beloved Messenger ﷺ. To describe this honest misunderstanding as an "insult and offense" offered to the Prophet ﷺ dramatically alters the meaning of this *Sahih Hadith*. This is a lesson for the scholars of Deoband, who lack the moral courage to seek forgiveness from Allah Almighty ﷻ and His Habib ﷺ. They should refer to his ﷺ saying:

> "When you do a wrong thing, you must immediately seek forgiveness; secretly for your secret action and openly for your open action[191]."

Repentance removes sin. The Ansar ؓ wept until their beards were wet with tears for bringing a grievance to the Prophet ﷺ! We are supposed to follow their example and increase our love for Sayyiduna Rasulullah ﷺ. There is a fundamental difference between the scholars of Deoband and the Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The former possess knowledge from books, while the latter have guidance. Allah Almighty made the *Sahabah* stick close to the command of piety (48:26). They can commit a sin, but they will immediately obtain guidance to repent[192].

Keller misuses this analogy to draw a parallel between the Ansar ؓ and the insult and offense offered to the Prophet ﷺ by the Ulama of Deoband. This can be seen in the summary of his essay, which appears in the section entitled *The Words of Ashraf Ali Thanwi*. The implication being that these

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[190] Shaykh Faizan ul-Mustafa, "A Just Response to the Biased Author;" available from http://www.gatewaytomadina.org/articles/A_Just_Reply_To_A_Biased_Author.pdf, 74-75.

[191] *Thesis*, 4:125.

[192] Mufti Ahmad Yaar Khan Naeemi ؒ, *Tafseer Noorul Irfaan* (Pretoria: Darul Uloom Pretoria, 2005), 2:795.

four men cannot even be charged with sin after blatantly demeaning Allah ﷻ and His Beloved Prophet ﷺ. Apparently, they do not owe Allah ﷻ and His Chosen One, with whom He is well pleased ﷺ, so much as an apology, what to speak of the Ummah which they beguile and lead astray. Shaykh Faizan ul-Mustafa refuted this aberrant view in "A Just Response to the Biased Author." The Barelwi Alim writes: "One must study Imam Suyuti's work titled *'al-Bahir'* on this issue. No person other than the Noble Prophet (may Allah give him peace and blessings) has the right to turn aside the obvious meaning of words especially while the obvious meaning is fixed to that word (*sarih muta'ayyan*) and the Deobandi statements are of this nature[193]!"

This is what A'la Hadrat ؓ meant when he described the Deobandi Shaykhs as, "the enemies of our faith, who do not act according to the essentials of the faith,[194] try to escape being labeled as disbeliever's by ridiculing *Islam, Qur'an, Allah* ﷻ, the *Nabi* ﷺ and our faith." Imam Ahmed Raza ؓ said:

> "To a lay-man, they say that their statements do not mean this. For Allah's ﷻ sake, make it clear what they were intended to mean by their writers[195]. The answer to this situation [denial of disbelief] is contained in the verse of the Holy Qur'an:

[193] Shaykh Faizan ul-Mustafa, "A Just Response to the Biased Author;" available from http://www.gatewaytomadina.org/articles/A_Just_Reply_To_A_Biased_Author.pdf, 75-76.

[194] "Think of the dignity and greatness, which Allah Almighty ﷻ has bestowed upon His Beloved Habib ﷺ. Base faith and *Islam* on His Prophet's ﷺ love and respect," see *Thesis*, 4:72.

[195] **An important warning:** saying they were "retorting against *bid'a,* or fighting *shirk" does not* change the meaning of their *clear statements* of disbelief. They had to insult the dignigty and honor of the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ in order to make their argument that his ﷺ knowledge is *inferior* to Satan, or *equal to* that of just anyone, a suckling babe, a madman, and animals. Otherwise, their statements have absolutely no meaning whatsoever.

﴾**They swear by Allah that they said nothing (wrong). Yet they did say the word of disbelief and did disbelieve after their surrender (to Allah).**[196]﴿

These misguided people have fashioned the ultimate excuse that they are sinless, and subsequently above seeking forgiveness. It must be understood that the Deobandis writers *deliberately* chose words as offensive to Allah ﷻ and His preeminent Apostle ﷺ as any could be, but instead of weeping until their beards were wet with tears they justified their disbelief! Islamic scholars are not exempt from sins and must repent to rectify all deficiencies in their character, then and only then will they be like one who has not sinned[197]! By the way, Nuh Keller **did not** quote or cite Imam Subki ؓ for this example.

Comparision to Hadrat Aishah Siddiqah ؓ

Nuh Keller also dares to compare their insulting words to an incident in the marital life of Sayyiduna Rasulullah ﷺ. In this case, he derives the ill-meaning from the chaste words of Hadrat 'A'ishah Siddiqah ؓ. She narrates this sahih hadith:

> "I used to look down upon those ladies who had given themselves to Allah's Messenger ﷺ and I used to say, 'Can a lady give herself to a man? But when Allah revealed:
>
> **You may put behind any of your wives you select and may give the place near [to] you any of them you like. And if you desire to have any one of those whom you have put aside, there is no blame on you (33:51).**

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[196] Ibid., 4:122-123.

[197] According to the *Hadith Shareef*, **"A sincere repenter from sins is like one who has not sinned,"** see Imam Ahmed Raza ؓ, "Muslim Rights," in *Thesis of Imam Ahmad Raza* ؓ (Durban: Barkaatur-Raza Publications, 2005), 3:71.

I said (to the Prophet ﷺ), "I feel that your Lord hastens in fulfilling your wishes and desires" (Bukhari, *Sahih*, Volume 6, Book 60, Number 240).

Keller interprets this *last* remark to be "a reproach against her husband, the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace)[198]." But he is presuming that Hadrat 'A'ishah Siddiqah ؓ took exception to the verse of exemption (33:51) *due to* "jealousy." It must be understood that "each time the *Sahabah* saw the Nabi ﷺ, a new luster of Love and Beauty beamed in their hearts as they experienced the Qur'an being revealed which taught them various ethics and *Adab* of the esteemed presence of the Habib ﷺ [199]." Prima facie there is absolutely no reason for her *last* remark to be one of "reproach." Contrary to what Keller might think, Lady 'A'ishah ؓ was undoubtedly praising her husband ﷺ, and marveling at Allah's ﷻ love for the Habib ﷺ! Ayat 33:51 continues:

﴿This is nigher that their eyes may be cooled and that they may not grieve, and they may be pleased with what you have given them. And Allah knows what is in the hearts of you all. And Allah is Knowing, Forbearing﴾ (*Tafseer Noor-ul-Irfaan*, 33:51).

According to *Tafseer Noor-ul-Irfaan* this Ayat means that the above-mentioned rights are not the Prophet's ﷺ responsibility, but rather imperial grants so that the hearts of his wives would be content and thereby no wife will have any complaint against any other wife[200]. This is also apparent from the *first part* of Hadrat 'A'ishah Siddiqah's ؓ narration. Then Allah ﷻ revealed the Ayat of exemption so that whatever attention and company a

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[198] Nuh Keller, "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir."
[199] Imam Ahmad Raza ؓ, "The Shadowless Prophet ﷺ," in *Thesis of Imam Ahmad Raza* (Durban: Imam Ahmad Raza Academy, 2005), tr. Shaykh 'Abd al-Hadi al-Qadiri, 1:113.
[200] *Tafseer Noor-ul-Ifraan*, 2:310.

wife received from the Habib ﷺ would be considered a favor and an act of courtesy and kindness. Therefore, it would be a source of happiness and satisfaction. Similarly, Imam Badr al-Din al-Ayni رحمه الله gives the following commentary for *Sahih Bukhari*: "What she means by this is that I only see that Allah is the originator of your wish, without delay sending down whatever you love and prefer[201]." Thus, her *last* remark was a compliment and an expression of awe.

Again the *Seerah* sheds light on the sanctity of their marriage. On one occasion the Prophet ﷺ said to his wife رضي الله عنها: "O 'A'ishah, it is not hidden from me when thou art angered against me, nor yet when thou art pleased." She inquired: "O dearer than my father and my mother, how knowest thou that?" And the Habib ﷺ replied: "When thou art pleased, thou sayst in swearing 'Nay, by the Lord of Muhammad,' but when thou art angered it is, 'Nay, by the Lord of Abraham[202].'" O Muslims! Lady 'A'ishah رضي الله عنها said to the Prophet ﷺ, "I feel that **your** Lord hastens in fulfilling your wishes and desires." She did not take the name of Prophet Abraham عليه السلام, which means she was *well* pleased with her beloved ﷺ!

Keller, however, describes her remark as "a mere emotional protest that lacked the explicit intention to demean or offend him." Thus, "it entailed no legal consequences." Do the words of Hadrat 'A'ishah Siddiqah رضي الله عنها even resemble blasphemy? Is there something ominous about the Lord عزوجل hastening to fulfill the Prophet's ﷺ "wishes and desires?" Of course, Keller chooses to use the word "whims," rather than "wishes and desires" in his translation of *Sahih Bakhari*. "Whims" gives a negative connotation to her remark and serves to enhance the alleged offense. By way of comparison, Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan's translation uses the phrase "wishes and

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[201] Shaykh Faizan ul-Mustafa, "A Just Reply to a Biased Author," accessed on 12 March 2010; available from http://www.gatewaytomadina.org/articles/A_Just_Reply_To_A_Biased_Author.pdf, 81.

[202] Martin Lings, *Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources* (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 1987), 271.

desires." This is because the Arabic word in question, غيرت or "*ghayrah,*" has several meanings and is **not** fixed to jealousy[203]. The term "whims" is inappropriate and totally inapplicable to Sayyiduna Rasulullah ﷺ since Allah ﷻ confirmed that he does not speak on his own. Ayat 53:4 says: ﴿**It is naught but revelation that is revealed to him**﴾[204]. O Muslims! One must avoid the ill-meaning. Keller should be more polite towards Umm al-Mu'minnin Sayyidah 'A'ishah Siddiqah ﵂ and the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Tafseer Noor-ul-Irfaan says that the Prophet's ﷺ wives were satisfied and well-pleased with what he had given them! There is no evidence of reproof. Nuh Keller's interpretation of the *Hadith Shareef* derives the ill-meaning. Once more, he **did not** cite Imam Subki ﵀ in his assement of *Sahih Bukhari*, which only goes to show how weak Keller's position really is! He ends his assessment of *Sahih Bukhari* by saying: "There are many similar examples of unintended offense in the sunna[205]."

Imam Bukhari ﵀ let this *Sahih Hadith* stand for itself protecting the laws of *Adab* (etiquette). He did not impute a meaning that would in any way diminish or demean the sanctity of Lady 'A'ishah's ﵂ blessed marriage. It is infinitely better for a Muslim to bend in the direction of respect! Hence, the best interpretation of *Sahih Bukhari* is that Hadrat 'A'ishah Siddaqah ﵂ was praising the Habib ﷺ.

According to Keller's erroneous analogies, the Prophet ﷺ graciously pocketed insults and the Companions ﵃ gave him offense without making *tawba*. He gives these examples in defense of the Deobandi Shaykhs. But this is a complete reversal of the *Sunnah*! According to Shaykh Muhammad

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[203] Shaykh Faizan ul-Mustafa, "A Just Reply to a Biased Author," accessed on 12 March 2010; available from http://www.gatewaytomadina.org/articles/A_Just_Reply_To_A_Biased_Author.pdf, 78.
[204] *The Approach of Armageddon?*, 176.
[205] Nuh Keller, "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir."

Hisham Kabbani, “The Sunnah of Muhammad ﷺ embodies all his actions and sayings and the actions and sayings by others of which he approved[206].” The Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ *did not* approve of being offended (adha) in any context, intentional or not. Nor was it the wont of the Sahabah رضي الله عنهم or his pure and pious wives رضي الله عنهن to give him offense! He ﷺ approved of *Adab* (etiquette). An example of this is recorded in this *Sahih Hadith*:

> “Musawwir bin Makh’ramah and Marwan bin al-Hakam report in a lengthy preamble of Hudaybiyah that ‘Urwah was staring at the companions of the Nabi ﷺ and then remarked: ‘By Allah! When the Prophet of Allah ﷺ washed his nose, the water fell in the hands of one of the Sahabah who rubbed it on his face, when he gave an order they rushed to fulfill it, when he performed Wudu they rushed for that water, when his Sahabah spoke to him, their tones were very soft and due to ultimate respect for him, they never raised their heads and looked at him.’ ‘Urwah then returned to his people (Kuffar Quraysh) and said: ‘I visited the Royal Courts of Qaysir, Qisrah and Najashi <u>but I did not see any King that was respected by his people more than the respect the Sahabah have for Muhammad</u> ﷺ,’” see Imam Jalal al-Din Suyuti’s رحمه الله *Khasais al-Kubra* (Maktaba Nuriyya Radawiyya edition), 1:241[207].

Comparison to a Bedouin

Nuh Keller has a flair for the dramatic. This time he relates another incident from *Sahih Bukhari*, in which, a bedouin pulled on the Prophet’s ﷺ cloak. It is obvious that Keller’s rendering of the *Hadith Shareef* is *subtley* different from other English translations. His rendering is ostensibly unproblematic except for the commentary he adds to it! In what seems to be a disingenuous interpretation; Keller uses the phrase “pulled him ﷺ” to assert that the

[206] *The Approach of Armageddon?*, 175.
[207] *Thesis*, 1:110.

bedouin “actually seized and choked[208]” Allah’s Messenger ﷺ. The idea of choking Allah’s Messenger ﷺ is a dramatic twist invented by Keller because the bedouin **never** “seized and choked” the Prophet ﷺ! He did pull violently on Sayyiduna Rasulullah’s ﷺ Najrani (an outer garment with a thick hem) and the impress of *the hem* was noticeable on his shoulder[209]. But, he **did not** seize the blessed body of the Allah’s Beloved Messenger ﷺ. This can be seen from the following English translations: one by Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan and the other by Ustadha Aisha Bewley. Her translation is from the SunniPath Library, i.e. the online Islamic academy that employees Nuh Keller. The former writes:

> “Narrated Anas bin Malik: While I was walking with the Prophet who was wearing a Najrani outer garment with a thick hem, a bedouin came upon the Prophet and **pulled his garment** so violently that I could recognize the impress of the hem of the garment on his shoulder, caused by the violence of his pull. Then the bedouin said, ‘Order for me something from Allah's Fortune which you have.’ The Prophet turned to him and smiled, and ordered that a gift be given to him.”

Similarly, Ustadha Aisha Bewley says:

> 2980. It is related that Anas ibn Malik said, "I was walking with the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, who was wearing a Najrani cloak with a thick hem when a desert Arab caught up to him and **pulled it** fiercely so that I saw the side of the Prophet's neck, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was marked by the hem of the cloak due to the intensity of the tugging. Then he said, 'Order for me some of the property of

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[208] Nuh Keller, “Iman, Kufr, and Takfir.”

[209] *Sahih Bukhari* (New Delhi: Lahoti Fine Art Press, 1984), Book 53: One-fifth of the Booty to the Cause of Allah (Khumus), Number 377, tr. Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan, Page 248. Underline is the compiler’s emphasis.

> Allah which you have with you!' He turned to him and laughed, and ordered that he be given a gift[210]."

By way of comparison, here is Keller's English translation of *Sahih Bukhari* as quoted in "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir:"

> "Anas ibn Malik (Allah be well pleased with him) said: I was walking along with the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace), who was wearing a cape from Najran with a thick edge, when a desert Arab caught up with him and **pulled him** so hard that I looked at the side of his neck and saw the mark on it from the violence of pulling the cape's edge. The man said, 'Order that I be given some of the wealth of Allah which you have!' The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) looked at him and laughed, then ordered he be given to (*Bukhari,* 4.115: 3149)."

Remember the problem is not one of translation, *but* interpretation. Keller *deliberately* changes the word(s) "pulled his garment" or "pulled it" to: "pulled *him*." This *extremely* subtle rephrasing enables him to allege that the Prophet ﷺ was "actually seized and choked by a bedouin demanding charity (*Burkhari,* 4.115:3149)[211]." Did Anas ibn Malik ؓ observe all of this with total apathy? Obviously, Keller is **deviating** from *Bukhari* and his own English translation. May Allah ﷻ protect the Ummah from such corruption! He maliciously exaggerates the bedouin's action from a violent pull on the Prophet's ﷺ outer garment to "actually" strangling and hurting

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[210] *Sahih Bukhari* (Book of Khumus, Number 2980), tr. Ustadha Aisha Bewley, accessed on 28 December 2009; available from http://www.sunnipath.com/Library/Hadith/H0002P0062.aspx.

[211] Nuh Keller, "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir." He uses this expression in the summary of his essay, which appears in the section entitled *The Words of Ashraf Ali Thanwi*.

the Habib ﷺ. After making a slight, almost imperceptible, change[212] to the wording of *Sahih Bukhari*, he goes on to furnish his own malevolent interpretation, which appears in the section of his essay entitled *Intentional and Unintentional Insult*:

> "Though the bedouin inflicted palpable physical pain on the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace), it was without legal consequence because he apparently only meant to stop the Prophet to talk with him[213]."

Such blatant misrepresentation of facts to drive home one's agenda truly borders on the criminal. Will a person with a reputation of being a modern day Islamic scholar plunge to such depths only to defend those who have been previously condemned as blasphemers? It seems that time is ripe for Nuh Keller to either revoke his stand or suffer the same fate as his clients.

The Imputed Insult

Keller's commentary twists each of these instances into an unintentional **"insult"** by exaggerating the offense in question. Thus, he accuses the Ansar of speaking "words as offensive to the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) as any could be," whilst simultaneously omitting the fact that they wept until their beards were wet with tears. We find Lady 'A'ishah's *last* word being one of reproach, instead of praise. And "the bedouin inflicted palpable physical pain on the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace)" without suffering the legal consequences of having given offense! The analogy is almost perfect, which is why Keller writes:

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[212] Increasingly Keller himself seems to be overtaken by "Salafi" tendencies which he so denounces. In this essay, he appears to be more like a "Salafi" than a student of Imam Shafi'i ؓ. When asked: "How widespread is tampering of texts by the Salafis?" Keller astutely answered: "I do not know how widespread it is, but it certainly does exist." Indeed it does, for here is a prime example. See Nuh Ha Mim Keller, "Re-Formers of Islam: The Mas'ud Questions" (1995), accessed on 30 September 2009; available from http://www.masud.co.uk/ISLAM/nuh/masudq3.htm.

[213] Nuh Keller, "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir."

> "It is also noteworthy that in each of these instances, the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) with instinctive compassion and wisdom gave due consideration to the emotional states that pushed people beyond the ordinary bounds of *adab* or manners with him. The vehemence of Deobandi writers 'defending Islam against shirk,' however misplaced, plainly affected the way they spoke about the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace). The above hadiths suggest that due consideration should be given to the emotions aroused by the 'fatwa wars' of their times, just as the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) gave consideration to people's emotions[214]."

It is incredibly presumptuous of Nuh Keller to pardon the Deobandis on behalf of Allah's Messenger ﷺ. The above manipulation of the *Hadith Shareef* through subtle literary jugglery suggests that a great deception is at work to mislead the Ummah from the Straight Path. Keller would do well to heed the words of the Best of Mankind ﷺ:

> "Allah has chosen me, my Sahaaba and my relatieves through marriage. Soon a group of people will come who slander them and diminish their esteem. Do not keep their company, do not eat with them and do not marry with them (Uqaili)[215]."

And similarly,

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[214] Ibid.

[215] Taajush Shari'ah, Mufti Mohammed Akhtar Raza Khan Azhari al-Qadri, *A Collection of Verdicts from Majmua Fatawa* (Durban: Habibi Darul Ifta, 2008), tr. Mufti Omar Dawood Qadiri Chishti Moeni, 36

> "Whoever purposely tells a lie about me, let him prepare; himself for his seat in the Fire" [Narrated from 'Abd Allah Ibn 'Amr by *Bukhari*, *Tirmidhi*, *Ahmad*, and *Darimi*][216].

It is without doubt slander to dimish the purity of the Companions love for the Habib ﷺ by twisting their chaste words into unintentional **"insults."** Nuh Keller **did not** quote or cite Imam Subki رضي الله عنه in any of the aforesaid examples, yet he attributes this revision of the pure Shari'ah to the famous Mujtahid Imam and Hadith Master رضي الله عنه alleging:

> "The *sahih* hadiths we have cited above show how strong this position of Subki's is, for the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was in one instance reproved by an upset wife with the words 'I don't see but that your Lord rushes to fulfill your own whims' (*Bukhari*, 6:147:4788); in another, accused of favoritism by those who said, 'May Allah forgive the Messenger of Allah: he gives to Quraysh and neglects us' (*Bukhari*, 4.114:3147); and in another, actually seized and choked by a bedouin demanding charity (*Burkhari*, 4.115:3149)- none of which did he consider a deliberate offense or *kufr*, because each was interpretable as an unintentional **insult**[217]."

For some reason, Keller relied on his own interpretation of the *Sahih Ahadith* instead of giving the authentic commentary from *al-Sayf al-maslul*, "a more than five-hundred-page work on the legal consequences of insulting the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace)[218]." Perhaps he was afraid

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[216] Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, *The Approach of Armageddon?*, 159.
[217] Nuh Keller, "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir." Underline and bold is the compiler's emphasis.
[218] This is Keller's description of *al-Sayf al-maslul*. The full title of this work is *al-Sayf al-maslul 'ala man sabba al-Rasul* [The Naked Sword upon the Person who Insults the Messenger ﷺ].

that Imam Subki's *real* position might only serve to further incriminate his clients[219]. Let's examine another case that *did not* entail the legal consequences of "giving offense" from Taqi al-Din al-Subki's ﵀ *al-Sayf al-maslul*:

> "This is proven by the word of Allah Most High about those who sat [too long] at the marriage feast of Zaynab [and the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace)]
>
> ﴿**O you who believe, do not enter the dwellings of the Prophet unless you are given leave to partake of the food, not waiting for it to be prepared, but rather enter when given permission, and leave when finished eating; not [lingering because of] enjoying conversation; truly, you offended (adha) the Prophet thereby**﴾ (Qur'an 33:53).
>
> These were the greatest of the Companions, who did not mean to give offense (adha) by doing this, so it did not entail its legal consequences (*al-Sayf al-maslul* (c00), 135)[220]."

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[219] In point of fact, all of these examples are found in *al-Sayf al-maslul,* but Keller chose to **omit** the original commentary, which is probably why he **did not** cite the Mujtahid Imam and Hadith Master ﵀. Shaykh Faizan ul-Mustafa addresses the hadiths on giving offense in his scholarly treatise "A Just Response to the Biased Author." The Barelwi Alim quotes Imam Subki ﵀ in his *al-Sayf al-maslul*. He gives the original Arabic along with an English translation and commentary to refute Keller using the same source. This article is available from www.gatewaytomedia.com, 60-68, and 72-79. Likewise, Shaykh Muhammed Monawwar Ateeq in his *Al-Taqyeed li-Dhabit al-Subki fi al-Takfir* reveals that the rule of Subki on the "intention of the offender" has been distorted by Shaykh Nuh Ha Mim Keller in "Iman, Kufr and Takfir" due to three primary reasons: (a) little knowledge about the different levels of entailment (*luzum*) and their grades of reliability in the Islamic law, (b) decontextualisation of the passage in which Subki presents the rule and (c) lack of study on the topic of takfir as a whole and hence confusion about matters in which there is ijma. This short yet replete critique is available at http://scholarsink.wordpress.com/2010/06/.

[220] Nuh Keller, "Iman, Kufr, Takfir."

This is the only example that Nuh Keller cites from Taqi al-Din al-Subki's magnum opus, *al-Sayf al-maslul*. Ironically and not too surprisingly he **omits** this example in his summary of "Subki's position!" The above case beautifully illustrates what the Shafii Imam meant by an "offense" that **did not** entail legal consequences. Essentially it is something innocent and well-meaning. If Allah ﷻ corrects the greatest of the Companions, who did not mean to offend the Prophet ﷺ, what must the consequences be for those who willfully insult the Chosen One? It should also be noted that the Prophet ﷺ **did not** appreciate being offended, even unintentionally. O Muslims! Is there any point of comparison between the above example and the "repugnant and unacceptable" words chosen by the Deobandi Shaykhs? These men made vile comparisons for the most knowledgeable of creation ﷺ. Allah Almighty ﷻ says:

> ﴾**Behold, how they coin similitudes for you [O Beloved Prophet ﷺ], and so they go astray, and cannot find a path!**﴿ **(17:48)**

Shaykh Abdul Al-Qadir Mohiuddin Al-Jilani ؓ quotes this verse in reference to the unbelievers (*kuffar*) of Mecca, who tried to affix their own labels to the Prophet ﷺ[221]. The enemies of Islam may try to demean Sayyiduna Rasulullah ﷺ, but when Muslims themselves try to diminish the stature and rank of Allah's Beloved Prophet ﷺ "it is beyond irreverent and enters the realm of the heretical[222]." Imam Ahmed Raza ؓ rightly asked: "Is the dignity of Rasulullah ﷺ even less than that of these people? Is this what you call faith[223]?" As there is no point of comparison, no further discussion of the *Sahih Ahadith* is necessary.

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[221] Shaikh 'Abd Al-Qadir Al-Jilani ؓ, *Sufficient Provision for the Seekers of the Path of Truth* (Hollywood, Al-Buz Publishing, INC., 1995), tr. Muhtar Holland, 1:278

[222] Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, *The Approach of Armageddon?,* 153.

[223] *Thesis,* 4:75.

PROBABLE POSSIBILITY

The august Mujaddid ﷺ says: "The question [that] arises is: Why have the Islamic scholars issued a verdict of disbelief when so many Islamic interpretations are possible? Obviously, they have given importance to the more *probable possibility* which goes towards disbelief. If we do not take this view the statements and the reasoning of the scholars will become null and void… Here it will suffice to quote the following words from ***Hadiqah Nadiya***:

> 'That is to say in the books of Islamic decision only those words have been considered adequate to give a verdict of disbelief through which the speaker had the intention of expressing the disbelieving shade of meaning, otherwise it would not be disbelief.'
>
> Only that probability is reliable, which appeals to the common sense. When a statement is clear, it is not advisable to explore the far-fetched probabilities. If we indulge in this sort of unreasonable exercise, nothing would be classified as disbelief. For example, Zayd says that there are two gods. If we try to interpret this statement metaphorically as two forms of Allah's ﷻ will. The *Qur'an* says:
>
> ﴾**Except that which Allah ﷻ decrees (that is) the order of Allah ﷻ**﴿ [33:38][224]'

[224] The Qur'an says, ﴾**And the command of God is an ordained decree**﴿ **(33:38)**, such as His being one, without partner and Holy beyond any evil or adversity, transcendent above any blemish or perversity. Nothing is like Him and no diety exists save him.

Amar may say, ‘*I am* the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.’ It can be presumed that he means literally because it is Allah ﷻ who has put soul into his body. These presumptions are not impossible but they don’t stand to reason. It is stated in ***Shifa Sharif***:

‘Where the statement is clear in itself there is no need to hear and consider the far-fetched probabilities.’

Mulla Ali Qari ﵀ in his commentary of ***Shifa Sharif*** says:

‘Such a claim in the Islamic Law is to be rejected.’

Nasim-ur-Riad shows:

‘Such an interpretation would not be considered sympathetically and it would be regarded as superfluous.’

Fatawa Khulasa, Fusul-e-A’mariyya, Jami-ul-Fasulin and ***Fatawa Hindiyyah***, etc. state:

‘If somebody calls himself a Prophet or a Messenger of Allah and by this he means to say that he takes messages, hence he is a Messenger he will become a disbeliever.’

This sort of interpretation will not be considered valid. May Allah ﷻ save us![225]”

In light of the authentic books of Fiqh, Keller’s first and second far-fetched justifications are clearly invalid. The scholars of Deoband had to insult the dignigty and honor of the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ in order to make their argument that the Habib’s ﷺ knowledge is *inferior to* Satan, or *equal to* that

[225] Imam Ahmad Raza ﵁, *Thesis*, 4:120-122.

of just anyone, the mentally ill, and animals. Otherwise, their statements have absolutely no meaning whatsoever. Moreover, the Deobandi "defense" is *totally* inapplicable to their founders' belief in *imkan al-kadhib* and *imkan al-nazir*. These aberrant doctrines have absolutely nothing to do with knowledge of the unseen and retorting bid'a.

Keller cannot represent the prosecution (A'la Hadrat ﷺ) without compromising his clients. Consequentially, he is forced to belie Imam Ahmed Raza's ﷺ real position, *probable possibility*, with his superficially similar argument *imputed intentionality*. Muslims are obliged to act upon the Qur'anic verse:

> ﴿**O you who believe, if a wicked person brings you tidings, verify it**﴾ (49:6).

Keller gives the following explanation of this ayat in his apologetic: "The Qur'anic scholar Sulayman al-Jamal notes that this does not merely apply to those who are corrupt, but rather Allah calls such a person *corrupt* in the above verse 'to repel and shock people from jumping to conclusions without checking' (*al-Futuhat al-ilahiyya*, 4.178)." After checking the facts, what we have consistently seen is a reversal of the Sacred Law on the part of the defense (Keller).

The Ulama of the Ummah from the time of the Companions ﷺ to the present day make absolutely no exception to this vedict, whether the insult has been committed intentenionally or unintentionally, or whether the abuser committed this act while considering it legitimate or illegitamte[226]. Hanafi scholars of distinction have held this view including Imam Haskafi ﷺ in his *al-Durr al-mukhtar*[227]!

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[226] See Appendix 2 in *Thesis*, 4:140.
[227] Ibid., 4:107.

The authentic books of Fiqh state that any person who insults Sayyiduna Rasulullah ﷺ is a disbeliever. Anyone who doubts his disbelief will himself become a disbeliever. This verdict is also in Imam Haskafi's رضي الله عنه *al-Durr al-mukhtar*,[228] which Keller is cognizant of since A'la Hadrat رضي الله عنه cites this work in *Husam al-Haramayn*. Their fragile arguments are based on a complex weaving of truth, half truths, lies and lies of omission that are invalid and wrong. Takfir may be politically incorrect among some Ulama today, but it is not a fallacy. Imam Ahmed Raza رضي الله عنه rightly said:

> "In 99 drops of rose water if you put one drop of urine, it will become urine. But these ignorant people say that if you put one drop of rose water into 99 drops of urine [then] the whole mixture will become pious and pure. Impossible[229]!"

A'la Hadrat, Mujaddid Imam Ahmed Raza رضي الله عنه wrote the fatwa of kufr, *Al-Mo'tamad Al-Mustanad*[230], in light of the *Holy Qur'an* and Sunnah. He is a true inheritor of our Master, Sayyiduna Rasulullah ﷺ.

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[228] *Thesis*, 4:116.
[229] Ibid., 4:111.
[230] *Husam al-Haramayn* begins with *Al-Mo'tamad Al-Mustanad*. This fatwa is followed by thrity-three verdicts and eulogies from top-ranking scholars of the Two Holy Cities.

DENIAL OF DISBELIEF

"The Sunnah of Muhammad, which embodies all his actions and sayings, and the actions and sayings by others of which he approved[231]," is to have a higher degree of respect and love for the Prophet ﷺ than the entire creation, and to seek forgiveness wholeheartedly after committing a sin.

Spiritual proximity to Allah ﷻ depends upon a Muslim's love for His Habib ﷺ and the depth of his repentance. These *four* men never made taubah for their open sins. In fact, even after being publically refuted by *Ahle-Sunnat* scholars Rashid Ahmad Gangohi and Qasim Nanotwi sent their delirious utterances for a second publication! Khalil Ahmad and Ashraf 'Ali Thanwi made this pathetic excuse and gave themseleves amnesty without so much as a sin, fault, or mistake. Muslims cannot accept an apology that was never given, nor can we pardon them on the Prophet's ﷺ behalf. Allah ﷻ says:

> ﴾**Those who annoy the Messenger of Allah, for them there is a painful doom**﴿ (9:61).

And He says:

> ﴾**And whoso of you takes them for friends belongs to them. Allah guides not the wrongdoing folks**﴿ (5:51)**.**

Nuh Keller claims that the Deobandi Shaykhs were completely innocent of having even given offense. He maintains:

> "Looking back, one cannot help wondering why Khalil Ahmad's and Ashraf 'Ali Thanwi's own students and teachers

[231] Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani , *The Approach of Armageddon?*, 175.

> and friends did not ask them, before their opponents asked them: When did any Islamic scholar ever compare the knowledge of the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) to the depraved, to the mad, or to animals—even to make a point? Few Muslims would suffer such a comparison to be made with their own father, let alone the Emissary of God (Allah bless him and give him peace). But while such words were indefensible breaches of proper respect, they were not *kufr,* because the intention behind them was **not** to insult the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace), but to defend Islam from what the writers viewed as a serious threat[232]."

If such a comparison is **insufferable** for our own father, then how can it be **"valid"** for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ? Keller forgets that Muslims are obliged to love and honor the Prophet ﷺ *more than* their own father and the whole of mankind (Bukhari and Muslim)! It is **impossible** to taste the sweetness of faith if one can suffer such a comparison for Sayyiduna Rasulullah ﷺ. The *Sahabah* gladly sacrificed their children and parents for Allah's Beloved Messenger ﷺ. At the Battle of Badr, Abu Bakr's son, Sayyiduna Abdur Rahman ؓ, was fighting on the side of the Kuffar. After accepting Islam, Sayyiduna Abdur Rahman ؓ said to his father, "O Father, at Badr, you were twice under my sword, but my love for you held my hand back." To this, Abu Bakr al-Siddiq ؓ replied, **"Son, if I had you only once under my sword, you would have been no more."** Alhamdulillah, this is Iman! Allah ﷻ admonishes us in Surah Taubah 9:24,

> ﴿**"Say: If your fathers, and your sons, and your brethren, and your wives, and your tribe, and the wealth ye have acquired, and merchandise for which ye fear that there will be no sale, and dwellings ye desire are *dearer to you than* Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ and striving in His way:**

[232] Nuh Keller, "Iman, Kufr, and Tafir." Underline and bold is the compiler's emphasis.

then wait till Allah bringeth His command to pass. Allah guideth not wrong doing folk.”﴾

This verse is undeniably decisive! It admonishes us to love Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ *more than* our fathers, sons, brethren, wives, tribe and wealth. Yet “Iman, Kufr, and Takfir” dismisses this unequivocal scriptural text. Keller purportedly **doesn’t** even consider such words to be insulting (*kufr*). “Offensive” yes, “artless,” no doubt, “repugnant and unacceptable,” absolutely, “far below the standards of normal Islamic scholarly discourse” sure, but insulting-- NEVER! If it is possible for Keller to impute an **“insult”** to our Master Muhammad ﷺ where none exists[233], then it should be rather straightforward to see the **obvious insult** in the words of the Deobandi Shaykhs. Or does Keller rank the Deobandis higher than the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ[234]? The words chosen by the scholars of Deoband fulfill all three criteria and conditions for ruling someone an apostate. Yet Nuh Keller arduously defends **“indefensible breaches of proper respect,”** which constitutes plain and open disbelief. Why does he perpetuate their *kufr* as Iman? His argument gives the false impression that their words were supposedly so well-intended that none of the aforementioned people[235] even thought to take exception to them. Initially most of the above mentioned people were unaware of what they had written. Today the scholars of Deoband conceal their disbelief, which is a great misfortune for the Ummah and a source of unnecessary strife.

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[233] Refer to Chapter Seven: Sahih Hadith to see the imputed insult.

[234] Abd Allah ibn Masud ؓ narrated that our Master Muhammad ﷺ said: “The best of people are my century, then those that follow them, then those that follow the latter. After that there will come people who will be eager to commit perjury when bearing witness” (Bukhari and Muslim).

[235] The aforementioned people being“Khalil Ahmad’s and Ashraf ‘Ali Thanwi’s own students and teachers and friends,” who *did not* ask them before their opponents did: “When did any Islamic scholar ever compare the knowledge of the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) to the depraved, to the mad, or to animals—even to make a point?” (Iman, Kufr, and Takfir).

When the disciples and followers of Rashid Ahmad Gangohi were confronted with two of his heretical statements, in which, he accused Allah ﷻ of lying and belittled the Holy Prophet ﷺ. They initially denied the charge since A'la Hadrat ؓ was quoting their Shaykh from memory. Pay close attention to their immediate response. Then see the number of excuses they make on behalf of the Deobandi Shaykh after seeing the book for themselves:

> "**They opposed me and said that their guide could not utter this blasphemy**. I showed them the book [*Baraheen-e-Qatiah*] and divulged his secret unbelief. They then under extreme misery had to say that that was not the work of their guide [Gangohi, but] rather it belonged to his disciple Khalil Ahmad Anbaithawi. I replied that he has written a eulogy on it and declared this book as a unique and august work, praying Allah for its approval. He also said that this book is a shining proof of the extensive light of knowledge, width of sagacity, understanding, goodness of speech and dignity of writing of the author.
>
> His disciple argued that he perhaps did not go through the entire book. He might have seen it doted and relied upon the extensive knowledge of his disciple. I said it is not so, rather he has written a eulogy, in which it is well explained that he had gone through this book from A to Z. He said perhaps he has not read it carefully. I said, shut up. Rashid Ahmad Gangohi has asserted to have read the book with care. The contents of his eulogy are as under:
>
> 'This worst of the mankind, Rashid Ahmad Gangohi, has read this august book *Baraheen-e-Qatiah*, from beginning to end with meticulous care'.

> Upon this, he was astonished like anything. Thus, the disbeliever was abashed. And Allah guides not wrongdoing foes (2:258)[236].

Incidentally, after seeing *Baraheen-e-Qatiah* they **did not** deny "this blasphemy." They merely sought to extract Gangohi from the work in question, which was written by his apologist Khalil Ahmad[237]. This is the same Deobandi scholar that after Gangohi's death (1323 A.H./1905 C.E.) wrote *al-Muhannad ala al-Mufannad* (The Sword on the Disproved), which allegedly expresses the beliefs of the Deobandi school. Khalil Ahmad was able to prove the so-called "Sunni-ness" of Darul Uloom Deoband by readily overturning many of the late founder's fatawa. In example, Gangohi and Khalil Ahmad affirmed that it is possible for Allah to lie, and denied the Prophet ﷺ knowledge of the unseen erroneously ruling that this belief of the *Ahle Sunnat* is *shirk* (polytheism). The latter knowingly disparaged the Best of Mankind ﷺ by saying his knowledge was *inferior to* Satan (the worst of creation) and the Angel of Death! Yet in *al-Muhannad ala al-Mufannad*, this same man said:

> "Whoever believes or states that Allah Most High lies is without a doubt an accursed unbeliever who contradicts the

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236 Imam Ahmad Raza ﵁, *Hussam al-Haramayn*, tr. Alhaaj Bashir Hussain Nazim, available from http://www.razanw.org/modules/products/item.php?itemid=1. Bold is the compiler's emphasis.

237 According to the eighth volume of Allama Sayyid Abd al-Hay ibn Fakhr al-Din al-Hasani's *Al-I'lam bi man fi Tarkih al-Hind min al-A'lam*, Rashid Ahmad Gangohi actually authored "*Al-Barahin al-Qati'a* in refutation of *Al-Anwar al-Sati'a* by Molwi 'Abd al-Sami' al-Rampuri, which was published under Shaykh Khalil Ahmad al-Sharanpuri's name" (see: http://deoband.org/2009/04/history/biographies-of-scholars/the-epitome-of-sharia-and-tariqa/). This is a Deobandi source and a Deobandi biographer. Incidentally, Hadrat Molwi 'Abd al-Sami' al-Rampuri ﵁ was a Khalifa of Haji Imdadullah Muharjir Makki ﵁. The famous Sabri-Chishti Shaykh **did not** support Rashid Ahmad Gangohi on this issue. He sided with the *Ahle Sunnat wal Jama'at* (http://www.freewebs.com/barelwi/IntroToAhlusSunnah.pdf, 10).

> Qur'an, the sunna, and the consensus of the Umma (*al-Muhannad 'ala al-mufannad* (c00) 72)" [238].

What a paradoxical flip-flop since Rashid Ahmad Gangohi also said:

> "So the belief of all the Scholars, Sufis and Ulema of Islam is that lies *are* within the Power of Allah[239]."

If *imkan al-kadhib* is true, then their aforementioned "belief" is false. Unless, of course, their Aqida book is true, then Gangohi's belief in the possibility of lying (on the part of Allah Most High!) is false. The choice is theirs: truth or falsehood. In *al-Muhannad 'ala al-mufannad*, Khalil Ahmad also reversed their stance on knowledge of the unseen. He revoked his statement in *Baraheen-e-Qatiah* by saying:

> "No creature ever received what the Prophet ﷺ has receivevd in the knowledge of the first and the last, whether angel brought near or Prophet-Messenger[240]!"

Rashid Ahmad Gangohi begs to differ. According to his fatawa[241]:

> "Knowledge of the unseen belongs exclusively to Allah Ta'ala. To use this word in any way for anyone else, I feel, is not free of shirk" (*Fatawa Rashidiyya,*1:20, 3:32 cf. 3:90, 2:141).

And,

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[238] Nuh Keller quotes Gangohi's fatwa in"Iman, Kufr, and Takfir."
[239] Rashid Ahmad Gangohi, *Fatawa Rashidiyya* (Delhi: Jayyad Barqi Press, n.d.), 1:20.
[240] Shaykh Gibril F Haddad is quoting *al-Muhannad 'ala al-mufannad* in his "Book Review of *Taqwiyat al-Iman: Strengthening of the Faith*," available from http://mac.abc.se/home/onesr/d/tqi_e.pdf.
[241] See Shaykh Gibril F Haddad's "Book Review of *Taqwiyat al-Iman: Strengthening of the Faith*" at http://mac.abc.se/home/onesr/d/tqi_e.pdf.

> “Hence, on this, all of the four Imams of the Schools and the Ulema agree that the Prophets do not have knowledge of the unseen” (*Mas’ala dar ‘Ilm Ghayb*, 4).

Since the Prophet’s ﷺ knowledge of the unseen is “not free of shirk,” doesn’t that make Khalil Ahmad a *mushrik* (polytheist)? As per the opinion of Rashid Ahmad Gangohi even his own students and colleagues (24 in all) are *mushrikeen* (polytheists) for verifying and endoring their *alleged* belief! This includes Ashraf Ali Thanwi and Shaykh al-Hind Mawlana Mahmud al-Hasan Deobandi. Top ranking *Ahle Sunnat* scholars from Arab lands also endorsed the Deobandi Aqida Book because it affirms the beliefs of the Saved Group. Khalil Ahmad *did not* attempt to rationalize their illegitimate opinions because four of the said Arab scholars from Mecca and Madina declared those statements to be *kufr*! For example, Shaykh as-Sayyid Ahmad al-Barzanji ﵀ (Mufti of the Shafi'is in Madina) wrote in his eulogy of *Husam al-Haramayn* that the statement in *Baraheen-e-Qatiah* is blasphemy for two reasons:

> “The first reason is that Devil has more extensive knowledge than the Prophet ﷺ and it is a clear belittlement of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The second reason is that he has termed the extensiveness of the knowledge of the Holy Prophet ﷺ as polytheism.
>
> All the leaders of four schools of thought have made clarifications that whosoever belittles the Glory of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is a disbeliever and whoever declares anything

belonging to Faith as polytheism and unbelief *is* unbeliever also[242]."

According to the venerable Shaykh, the Deobandis used a false precedent[243] to establish "the proposition of the possibility of falsehood or lie[244]." This is why Khalil Ahmad presented a fatwa that contradicts their *unofficial* belief. **Nota Bene:** The venerable Shafii Mufti in Madina ؓ is censuring the "possibility of falsehood or lie" in and of itself. As opposed to the so-called "factual possibility of [God's] lying," which is an invention of Keller's to "exculpate Gangohi from the charge of *kufr*[245]." For details read Shaykh as-Sayyid Ahmad al-Barzanji's ؓ eulogy in *Husam al-Haramayn*[246].

Khalil Ahmad affirmed their "Sunni-ness" by formally recanting their statements of disbelief; thus, one will not find him justifying their kufr in *al-Muhannad 'ala al-mufannad*. In point of fact, he said[247]:

> "It is our belief that whosoever says that so and so is more knowing than the Holy Prophet ﷺ is a polytheist, and our elders have pronounced fatawa of polytheism against a person who says that Shaitaan, the accursed, is more knowing than the Holy Prophet ﷺ" (*al-Muhannad 'ala al-mufannad*).

[242] Imam Ahmad Raza ؓ, *Hussam al-Haramayn*, tr. Alhaaj Bashir Hussain Nazim, available from http://www.razanw.org/modules/products/item.php?itemid=1, 137/149 (pdf version).

[243] The false precedent is underlined: "The meaning of the possibility of (Allah) lying is that it is within the power of Allah to lie, meaning that <u>whatever punishment has been promised (for the Kuffaar or sinner) by Allah, He has the Power to do the opposite to that even if He does not do it</u>" (*Fatawa Rashidiyya*, 1:20).

[244] *Husam al-Haramayn*, 136/149 (pdf version).

[245] Nuh Keller, "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir."

[246] Imam Ahmad Raza ؓ, *Hussam al-Haramayn*, tr. Alhaaj Bashir Hussain Nazim, available from http://www.razanw.org/modules/products/item.php?itemid=1, 136-137/149 (pdf version).

[247] Both quotes were excerpted from *White and Black: Facts of Deobandism* by Allamah Kaukab Noorani Okarvi; available from http://www.nooremadinah.net/EnglishBooks/WhiteAndBlack/WhiteAndBlackPrint.asp.

And,

> "He who deems or declares the knowledge of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to be equal to the knowledge of Zaid and Bakr (i.e. any man) or animals or madmen is a through polytheist" (*al-Muhannad 'ala al-mufannad*).

Yet "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir" asserts that their polytheistic statements have a valid meaning. Nuh Keller is exploiting his students by willfully taking advantage of their noviceship. Endnote 35 says:

> "[35] That is, scholars and muftis whose understanding of the matter derived from Ahmad Reza Khan's sending them his own *Husam al-Haramayn* to ask for endorsements, which a number of them gave, then subsequently withdrew when Deobandis presented their side, some of the most salient points of which have been coveyed in the previous section [see: *Conclusions*]" (Iman, Kufr, and Takfir).

For such an outstanding point, one wonders why Keller made it an endnote in his apologetic! He must be referring to *al-Muhannad ala al-Mufannad*. But rest assurd, it is the Deobandis who had to publically withdraw and repudiate their own statements of disbelief! The Haramayn Ulama did not change their position because Khalil Ahmad and Thanwi had to concur with A'la Hadrat ؓ. *Husam al-Haramayn*[248] is an authentic book written by a truthful and conscientious Alim. To summarize, the Deobandi Shaykhs were forced to overturn their *unofficial* beliefs in order to get their school

[248] *Husam al-Haramayn* is synonymous for *Al-Mo'tamad Al-Mustanad*. The latter is the fatwa of kufr written by Imam Ahmed Raza ؓ, while the former is a compilation of all 34 verdicts. Thrity-three were written by top-ranking scholars from Mecca and Medinah, who enthusiastically endorsed A'la Hadrat's ؓ verdict, namely, *Al-Mo'tamad Al-Mustanad*.

reinstated. These Wahhabi doctrines are unbelief, and lead to the Fire of Hell. Beware of them and the groups enamored with them.

Official v. Unofficial Belief

One wonders why the "official" Deobandi Aqida Book wasn't written in 1902 when the fatwa of kufr was published in India. Rashid Ahmad Gangohi was alive and well at that time. Yet he did not beseech his apologist to overturn his fatawa and prove their "Sunni-ness." Indeed, more than a century later, their statements of **unbelief** are being promoted on the World Wide Web! According to Nuh Keller, "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir" represents "the most salient points" of the Deobandis side. In other words, his apologetic is the *official* Deobandi Aqida Book, which means they did not renounce their disbelief! This deviant sect operates in the name of Islam within the framework of the Hanafi school preying on Muslims. They insidiously corrupt our Iman (faith) and poision our understanding of the religion.

We shall now examine the effect this school of thought has had on Nuh Keller, as he attempts to defend their "*Hakim al-Umma*" (Spiritual Physician of the Muslim Umma), Mawlana Ashraf 'Ali Thanwi.

The Apparent Meaning

Nuh Keller's higher degree of repect and love for these *four* men leads him to turn a blind eye to the Sunnah of Muhammad ﷺ and the consensus of the community. This is evident from Keller's attempt to justify Thanwi's stance. In his futile effort to defend Thanwi he is forced to put **"aside"** the insult. He writes:

> "Thanwi apparently meant that the Prophet's (Allah bless him and give him peace) knowledge of the unseen was *the same in kind* as that any of the others mentioned, that is, the knowledge of the *relative* unseen, which, as explained above, merely

> means that each of Allah's creatures knows something that is 'unseen' to others, while Allah alone has absolute knowledge of *all* of the unseen.
>
> **Aside from** Thanwi's artless comparison of the highest of creation with the lowest, the very point of saying it in refutation of Reza is not plain, in view of the latter's explicit acknowledgement that no one can equal Allah's knowledge or possess it independently or be given anything but a part of it, even if, as Reza says, 'what a patent and tremendous difference between one part [the Prophet's] and another [anyone else's]: like the difference between the sky and the earth, or rather even greater and more immense' (*al-Dawla al-Makkiyya* (c00), 291)[249]."

Keller brushes **"aside"** the insult in the first line of his second paragraph. One cannot put aside the fact that Thanwi compared the Best of Creation ﷺ to the *lowest of creation* (madmen, animals and beasts)! The Deobandi Shaykh maliciously degraded the Habib ﷺ. To call Thanwi's words "artless" is bordering on calling Shaytan, the accursed, "innocently playful." The words used by Thanwi were a direct affront to the stature of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and no amount of verbal and intellectual finagling by Nuh Keller can change this. As Keller himself puts it:

> "This 'patent and tremendous difference' is clear, as we have seen, from the great knowledge of the unseen given to the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) in the hadiths of Bukhari, Muslim, and Tirmidhi, which, taken with the vastness of the revelation of the Qur'an and sunna as a whole, make it easy to see why Reza and others called him 'Knower of the Unseen'—meaning in comparison to the rest of mankind, not to

[249] Nuh Keller, "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir." Bold is the compiler's emphasis.

> Allah—and that by any measure, he possessed knowledge plainly not of the same order as that possessed 'by every child and madman, and even by all animals and beasts,' to use Thanwi's phrase[250]."

So if Thanwi and Keller clearly know that such a comparison cannot be made and is at best "artless," then why make it? Thanwi had apparently objected to the Prophet ﷺ being called the "knower of the unseen" by A'la Hadrat ؓ. If Thanwi's entire intention was simply to clarify, "whether this 'unseen' refers to merely *some* of the unseen or *all* of it," why did he not say so in as many words? If Keller can put it so simply, then why not Thanwi, who was known as the *Hakim al-Umma* ('Spiritual Physician of the Muslim Umma') and *Mujaddid al-Milla* ('Reformer of the Nation')[251]? Where was the necessity to make such vile comparisons? Further, if he meant no harm or insult by making such comparisons then why didn't he issue a public apology?

The very idea that the knowledge of Sayyiduna Rasulullah ﷺ can be compared to that of the devil or an animal let alone a madman or ordinary human being, would be an anathema to most Muslims. This can be clearly seen even today by the reactions in the Muslim world to the infamous Danish cartoons. To be able to draw such comparisons, one needs to be either: a complete imbecile or deliberately insulting towards the Prophet ﷺ. It is obvious that Thanwi was not the former. Yet, Keller persists to defend Thanwi's tyranny and misguidance by falsely alleging that A'la Hadrat ؓ condemned these men too quickly without referring to the context of their remarks. He writes:

> "At the latter words, the fiery pen of Ahmad Reza Khan wrote his *Husam al-Haramayn* [Sword of the Meccan and Medinan

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[250] Nuh Keller, "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir."

[251] http://www.whitethreadpress.com/authors/maulana_thanawi.htm

> Sanctuaries], in which he condemned Thanwi, Saharanpuri, and other Deobandis—without referring to the context of their remarks, or what they had been written in reply to…[252]"

So what exactly is the context of these remarks? Merely this - that a clarification was sought regarding the extent of Sayyiduna Rasulullah's ﷺ knowledge by Thanwi from the great Mujaddid ﵁. However, it is evident that in this case, the issue is not one of context, but rather one of wording i.e. the words in themselves that were used to ask the clarification. It should be very clear to those with a powerful intellect, such as Nuh Keller, that some words convey their literal meaning despite the context. It is equally obvious that one such as A'la Hadrat ﵁ would know the context of the statements. But such a context can never justify the words used, and this is precisely what the great Mujaddid ﵁ wrote against.

Such words can never be excused irrespective of the context. Hundreds of Ulama, including some very established scholars of the day (who no doubt would understand the literary subtleties that Keller refers to), therefore, supported A'la Hadrat's ﵁ famous fatwa. To say that the great Mujaddid made a "mistake" is not only slanderous but also flies in the face of such august scholarship.

The Concensus of the Community

Even after issuing the verdict of apostasy, Imam Ahmed Raza ﵁ did not deny these misguided men the option of seeking forgiveness in order to obliterate their disbelief! A'la Hadrat ﵁ mentions this in *Tamheedul Iman*, when he wrote:

> "It should be understood that the prerogative not to forgive is limited to the court of the Islamic ruler, because he has to pronounce the death sentence even after hearing the plea of

[252] Nuh Keller, "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir."

> forgiveness. On the other hand, if somebody seeks forgiveness sincerely and heartily it is acceptable in the Court of Allah Ta'ala. There is a danger that these misguided people may put up an excuse that there is no point in seeking forgiveness because it cannot be granted. The correct position is that the disbelief will be obliterated; you will become a Muslim and get saved of the eternal confinement of Hell. To this extent there is unanimity amongst the Islamic scholars (see ***Radd-ul-Muhtar*** and other books)[253].

Unfortunately for the Ummah, Khalil Ahmad Saharanpuri and Ashraf Ali Thanwi never apologized for their statements of disbelief. In point of fact, they justified their "artless comparisons." Hence, they made this flimsy, far-fetched excuse. Instead of making *tawba*, the Deobandi Shaykhs opted to cover over their unbelief. In consequence, those who consider them Muslims knowing full well what they said, such as Nuh Keller, have to conceal the truth. Is it any wonder then that fourteen hundred years of Islamic scholarship support *Husam al-Haramayn*?

In this respect, Keller should recall the words of Imam Shahab al-Din Khafaji Hanafi ؒ in *Naseem-ar-Riyad,* 4:426, who said:

> "The verdict of infidelity for insulting the Holy Prophet ﷺ will depend upon the apparent words and no consideration will be given to the intention and the purpose of the person committing the insult and the circumstances of the time[254]."

And similarly, Allama Akhi Yusuf ؒ in *Dhakhairat al-Uqba* said:

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[253] *Thesis,* 4:107-108.
[254] *Thesis,* 4:140.

> "It is beyond doubt that the whole of the Ummah is unanimous that one who slanders the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ or other Prophets, is an infidel, whether he committed this act while considering it legitimate or illegitimate. He is an infidel in the opinion of the Ulama; and whoever doubts his infidelity is also an infidel[255]."

Knowledge without guidance is ignorance and misguidance! Do not be misled by Nuh Keller's apologetic. "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir" reverses the Sunnah of Muhammad ﷺ; twists *the meaning* of their detestable words towards belief; belies a valid fatwa; and defames a preeminent scholar-saint. More than a century ago, Imam Ahmed Raza ؓ rightly said:

> "Their fraudulent denial is just like saying that the insolent people who have used insulting language for Allah ﷻ and His Prophet ﷺ were not born in this world, and nothing can be done because it is all unreal. May Allah ﷻ give them a sense of self-respect![256]"

[255] Ibid., 4:141.
[256] Ibid., 4:125.

INSIDIOUS POINTS

Nuh Keller writes his defense of Khalil Ahmad in the form a critique to give the impression of having objectively refuted the "mistakes" of both men, that is, A'la Hadrat ﷺ and the Deobandi Shaykh. However, Nuh Keller resolutely defends Khalil Ahmad's denial of the Prophet's ﷺ knowledge of the unseen as a *fundamental* tenet of faith. He does this by making a distinction between the *fundamentals* of faith (usul al-'aqa'id), and "its *details* (furu' al-'aqa'id) such as issues of prophetology like this one, which *are* established by single hadiths[257]". For the record, the Prophet's ﷺ knowledge of the unseen *is* esbalished by the undeniably decisive text of the Qur'an and many hadith with multiple paths of transmission (*mutawatir/tawatur*). We quote on the authority of Qadi Iyad ﷺ in his book *al-Shifa*, concerning the Prophet's ﷺ knowledge of the unseen:

> "The hadith on this subject are like a vast ocean whose depths cannot be plumbed and which does not cease to overflow. This is one aspect of his miracles which is definitely known. We have many hadith which have reached us by multiple paths of transmission (*tawatur*) regarding his familiarity with (*ittila*) the unseen[258]."

Keller made this preposterous claim despite reading Imam Ahmed Raza's masterpiece *al-Dawla al-Makkiyya li al-madda al-ghaybiyya* and *Husam al-Haramayn*. He quotes and cites the former work in the section of his essay entitled *Ahmad Reza and the Prophet's Knowledge of the unseen*[259]. O

[257] Nuh Keller, "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir."
[258] Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, *Encyclopedia of Islamic Doctrine: The Prophet* ﷺ (Mountain View: As-Sunna Foundation of America, 1998), 3:116.
[259] Nuh Keller, "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir." He also cites this work in the section entitled *The Words of Ashraf Ali Thanwi*.

Muslims! As we shall see, Keller deliberately misrepresents the major works of A'la Hadrat to accord with his *own* opinions and whims. He is confusing the issue in order to categorize Khalil Ahmad as a *fasiq*, instead of a *kafir*. He writes,

> "someone who denies it [a tenet of faith established by single hadiths] is a *fasiq* or 'sinful Muslim' for not fulfilling the obligation of believing in it, while someone who denies a tenet of faith established by an undeniably decisive scriptural text that is impossible to misunderstand or be ignorant of is a *kafir*, for rejecting something necessarily known to be of the religion (*Reliance of the Traveller* (c00), 626–27)[260]."

Thus, he reduces Khalil Ahmad's offense from a capital crime punishable by death for disparaging the Habib ﷺ to a mere misdemeanor. Of course, Keller wants to appear "objective" so he *strongly* criticizes Khalil Ahmad's claim that belief in the vastness of the Prophet's ﷺ knowledge is contrary to "the Qur'an and hadith." He does this by alleging:

> "All the texts that Khalil Ahmad has cited about the limitariness of the Prophet's knowledge (Allah bless him and give him peace) <u>can be interpreted, as Ahmad Reza did, to refer to *before* Allah disclosed to him the vast knowledge that he affirmed of himself and patently demonstrated (blessings and peace be upon him) in the above ***sahih* hadiths**</u>[261]."

Thanks to this aberrant interpretation the evidentiary texts in *Baraheen-e-Qatiah* are "invalid as evidence for the limitariness of the prophetic knowledge." **An important warning:** The evidence is invalid because

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[260] Ibid.
[261] Nuh Keller, "Iman, Kufr, and Tafir." Underline and Bold is the compiler's emphasis.

Khalil Ahmad denied *‘ilm al-ghaib* outright. Keller is affirming it as a *detail*, which explains why he writes: “it is disingenuous for an Islamic scholar to mention the lack of explicit textual evidence in the Qur’an without mentioning that there is such evidence in *hadith*.” This duplicitous argument allows Keller to put down the Deobandi Shaykh while reinforcing his belief that the Prophet’s ﷺ knowledge of the unseen is a mere *detail* of faith “established by single hadiths.” Thus, he exonerates Khalil Ahmad without giving*‘ilm al-ghaib* its’ due as a *fundamental* tenet of faith. Here are the ayats that Keller quotes in *Ahmad Reza and the Prophet’s Knowledge of the unseen* to substantiate this fallacious claim:

> “They ask you about the Final Hour, when it shall take place. Say: Only my Lord has knowledge of it: no one shall reveal it in its time but He. It weighs heavily on the heavens and earth; it shall not come upon you, but of a sudden. They ask you as if you knew all about it. Say: Its knowledge is only with Allah, but most people know not. Say: I am not able to either benefit or harm myself, except as Allah wills. If I had had knowledge of the unseen, I would have had great good from it, and no harm touched me. I am naught but a warner and a bearer of good tidings to people who believe” (Qur’an 7:187–88).

After quoting these ayats Keller writes:

> “There are many similar Qur’anic verses, all of which Ahmad Reza Khan interpreted as referring to the earlier life of the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace), before Allah bestowed on him greater knowledge, until, in the final years of his life, Allah disclosed to him everything that was and everything that will be until Judgement Day. By this interpretation Ahmad Reza was able to reach an accord between verses like those above, and **the hadiths** which

mention the Prophet's vast knowledge of the unseen (Allah bless him and give him peace)[262]."

This is **not** A'la Hadrat ﷺ interpretation. His authentic position is based on the undeniably decisive scriptural text that he presented in *Husam al-Haramayn*. The august Mujaddid ﷺ quotes revelations from Mecca (3:179) and Madinah (4:113, 72:26-27) to prove that the Prophet ﷺ possesses knowledge of the unssen. He also refers to two sahih ahadith in *Husam al-Haramayn*. It is disingenuous of Keller to only mention the "rigorously authenticated (sahih) hadiths" when writing about "Ahmad Reza's position." But what's far more disconcerting is his imputing such an aberrant interpraton of the Qur'an to A'la Hadrat ﷺ. Using such texts from the Qur'an and Hadith to forward *his own* belief about "the Prophet's not knowing things" is vile indeed.

The verses that Nuh Keller mentions are an expression of the Prophet's ﷺ dignity and humility. He is forgetting that Allah ﷻ speaks of the Prophet ﷺ in a lustrious and timeless sense. Accordingly, the correct Sunni belief is that the Prophet ﷺ is destorying any claim to nature other than human, i.e. god or angel. Verses that express humility were also revealed in answer to the unbelievers and hypocrites, who asked the Prophet ﷺ for miracles in a spirit of disbelief and mockery. By quoting these verses Nuh Keller is *attempting* to prove the supposed ordinariness of the Prophet ﷺ! This is an aberrant practice and a true underestimation of Sayyiduna Rasulullah's ﷺ rights and of Allah's generosity to him[263]. Imam Ahmed Raza ﷺ saw these verses as an expression of the Prophet's ﷺ dignity and humility fully

[262] Nuh Keller, "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir." Underline and bold is the compiler's emphasis.

[263] Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, *Encyclopedia of Islamic Doctrine: The Prophet* ﷺ (Mountain View: As-Sunna Foundation of America, 1998), 3:128-129.

appreciating his timeless nature[264]. On the other hand, “Salafis” often quote these verses in support of their view that the Prophet ﷺ was “only a human being like any of you” [18:110][265].

There are several fundamental problems with Keller’s interpretation, which we wish to explore. First, he is *attempting* to establish an artificial time in “the earlier life of the Prophet [ﷺ]” when Sayyiduna Rasulullah ﷺ **did not** know the Unseen. However, by quoting the aforementioned ayats (all Makkan surahs *before* Hijrah), Keller has inadvertently defined the “earlier life of the Prophet [ﷺ]” as the period of the Makkan Revelations. Thus, we can deduce “a time” when *allegedly* the Prophet ﷺ did not know the Unseen. Keller reinforces this definition by affirming that Allah ﷻ disclosed everything to the Prophet ﷺ “in the final years of his life.” A’la Hadrat رضي الله عنه **never restricted** the Prophet’s ﷺ knowledge to a particular time or place.

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264 The Prophet’s ﷺ said: “I was a Prophet when Adam عليه السلام was yet between water and clay” (Muhammad ibn ‘Isa at-Tirmidhi رضي الله عنه, XLVI, I and Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Hanbal رضي الله عنه, IV, 66). This is a sound hadith.

265 Nuh Keller ignores the profound meaning of Ayat 18:110, 《**Say, I am but a mortal like yourselves, but *I* receive revelation**》. He quotes it to insinuate that the Prophet’s ﷺ knowledge *did not* entail greater merit (see: *The Six Disputed ‘Aqida Issues*). The word **“revelation”** distinguishes the Prophet ﷺ from other men. Sayyiduna Rasulullah’s ﷺ incomparability is being described by the words, **“but *I* receive revelation.”** The first part of this verse is an expression of his humility. If Muslims use this verse to claim equality with the Prophet ﷺ, then they are in serious risk of corrupting their Iman. For Allah ﷻ says: 《**Make not the summoning of the Messenger among yourselves like one calls the other among you**》 **(24:63)**. If a king says to his subjects “I am your servant” he does so out of humility. Conversely, a subject will be punished for calling his king a “servant.” The Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is a mirror reflecting Allah’s beauty. A mirror is totally covered on one side in order to show us our reflection. Similarly, on one side the Prophet ﷺ is light, but on the opposite side he has been given the covering of a man. Thus, through these diverse natures he becomes a complete mirror. Ayat 18:110 refers to his human side, while the verse: 《**There has come to you from Allah a Light**》 **(5:15)**, mentions the other side (*Tafseer Noor-ul-Irfaan,* 2:961-962). In reality, no one is a “human being” like Sayyiduna Rasulullah ﷺ. One of the signs of the Last Days is that people will attack Allah’s Beloved Messenger ﷺ by subversively demeaning his station and honor.

Are we seriously supposed to believe that the Chosen One ﷺ (who saw the Archangel Gibril ؑ in the cave at Mount Hira) did not possess knowledge of the unseen at the inception of his prophethood? Can we honestly say that Sayyiduna Rasulullah ﷺ did not possess *'ilm al-ghaib* when he undertook the Isra and Mi'raj? Our Master Muhammad ﷺ went on the Night Journey *before* the Hijrah (622 C.E.)! The Prophet ﷺ was carried by the Buraq to Masjid Al Aqsa in Jerusalem and began his ascent into the Heavens where he led the other prophets in prayer until at last he was brought to *the Lote Tree of the Uttermost End*! This miraculous event transpired in the middle portion of his life.

The Holy Qur'an testifies to this miracle in Ayats 17:1, 17:60, and 53:1-18 (all Makkan Revelations *before* Hijrah). *Nazm al-Mutanathir in al-hadith al-Mutawatir* (p. 207-209) by Al-Kattani ؓ "listed as forty-five the number of Companions who related something pertaining to the Prophet's ﷺ night-journey. Accordingly, the scholars have graded the event of *isra'* as mass-transmitted (*mutawatir*), together with the facts that it took place on top of the *Buraq* and that the Prophet Idris ؑ is in the Fourth Heaven[266]." These events **obviously** took place beyond the veil of ordinary phenomena so how can any Muslim of sound faith and mind deny the Prophet ﷺ knowledge of the unseen? The Messenger of Allah ﷺ gave Abu Bakr ؓ the name *as-Siddiq*, which means "the great witness of truth" or "the great confirmer of the truth[267]" because of his affirmation of this phophetic miracle in which Sayyiduna Rasuluallh ﷺ **experienced** the Unseen *well before* "the final years of his life." The Isra and Mi'raj is one of the more famous incidents in the Prophet's ﷺ life that give testimony to his knowledge of the unseen. Every Muslim knows this and many celebrate the occasion each year. The Deobandis would do well to remember that the mode of *salaat* (prayer) that

[266] Al-Sayyid Muhammad Ibn 'Alawi al-Maliki ؓ, "The Hadith of Isra' and Mi'raj" in *Islamic Doctrines & Beliefs: Volume 1* (Fenton: As-Sunna Foundation of America, 1999), 52 (footnote 87).
[267] Martin Lings, *Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources* (Lahore: Qindeel Press, 1987), 103.

is incumbent upon every Muslim was revealed during this auspicious journey to the heavens[268]!

According to Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, “this profusion of the Prophet’s knowledge of the unseen has been characterized by Allah as perspicuity and an ability to reveal knowledge of the unseen, in the two verses: ﴾**His sight swerved not, nor swept astray**﴿ (53:17) [and] ﴾**He (Muhammad) is not stingy of the unseen**﴿ (81:24)[269].” It should be clear that the Prophet ﷺ was receiving tidings of the Unseen throughout his prophethood. In every moment Allah ﷻ was increasing him in this profuse, perspicuous knowledge. The Makkan verses that Khalil Ahmad and Nuh Keller interpreted as a lack of knowledge are merely an expression of the Prophet’s ﷺ dignity and humility. The purpose of these verses is to show personal humility and not to negate such knowledge. For this reason, the verses **do not** contradict one another. To summarize, the Prophet ﷺ knows, but he is humble and does not boast[270]. The arguments put forth in “Iman, Kufr, and Takfir” are misguided and misguiding. Allah ﷻ warns us saying:

> ﴾**Then is it only a part of the Book that ye believe, and do ye reject the rest?**﴿ (2:85)

Keller’s interpretation is wrong; in consequence, his *ijtihad* (legal reasoning) is invalid. The scriptural text in *Husam al-Haramayn* is undeniably, decisive! The Prophet’s ﷺ knowledge of the unseen is a *fundamental* tenet of faith. The Deobandis and their inheritors, by that we mean anyone who considers their insults to be the truth and the insulter to be a believer and

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[268] Martin Lings, *Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources* (Lahore: Qindeel Press, 1987), 102

[269] Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, *Encyclopedia of Islamic Doctrine: The Prophet* ﷺ (Mountain View: As-Sunna Foundation of America, 1998), 3:114-115. Bold is the compiler’s emphasis.

[270] Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, *Encyclopedia of Islamic Doctrine: The Prophet* ﷺ (Mountain View: As-Sunna Foundation of America, 1998), 3:128-131.

their leader, are Wahhabis with a face lift! Their writings deliberately ignore *certain* tenets of faith. The end result is that they pay homage to the Hanafi school without actually following in the footsteps of the great *fuqah*! Such people wear the mask of Imam Hanifa ﵁, but in their heart of hearts they are followers of Muhammad ibn ‘Abd Wahhab or Ismail Dihlawi or the Deobandi Shaykhs. The extreme position taken by these scholars inescapably leads one to the same end, heresy[271]. Shaykh al-Islam, A’la Hadrat, Imam Ahmed Raza ﵁ rightly said:

> “The lawful heir of the Prophet is a person who is on the right path. An insolent person, who is on the wrong path, is an heir to Satan rather than the Prophet. To respect a true scholar is to respect the Prophet, and to respect an insolent scholar is to respect Satan[272].”

And similarly he said:

> “Iblis was a distinguished scholar and yet not even a single Muslim respects him. He was known as the teacher of Angels, which implies he used to impart knowledge to the Angels. He became cursed and rejected when he refused to bow to the light of Sayyiduna Rasulullah ﷺ[273], which was shinning on the

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[271] Keller himself writes: “Thus the difference between a tenet of faith established by a single hadith and a tenet of faith established by a ‘decisive scriptural text’ (an unequivocal Qur’anic verse or *mutawatir* hadith) is not that the former is not a tenet of faith—but merely that someone who denies it is a *fasiq* or ‘sinful Muslim’ for not fulfilling the obligation of believing in it, while someone who denies a tenet of faith established by an undeniably decisive scriptural text that is impossible to misunderstand or be ignorant of is a *kafir*, for rejecting something necessarily known to be of the religion (*Reliance of the Traveller* (c00), 626–27).” Underline is the compiler’s emphasis. Imam Ahmed Raza’s fatwa of *kufr* against the Deobandis was legally valid by Keller’s own admittance.

[272] Imam Ahmed Raza ﵁, *Thesis*, 4:88.

[273] “Jabir b. ‘Abd Allah ﵁ asked the Prophet ﷺ, ‘What is the first thing that God created?’ To this, the Prophet ﷺ replied, ‘O Jabir! The first thing God, the Sublime and

forehead of Sayyiduna Nabi Adam ﷺ. From that moment, the former pupils of Iblis changed their behavior with him. They cursed him[274]."

Demonization vs Disassociation

Throughout his apologetic, Nuh Keller blames the fatwa of apostasy for being a source of divisiveness, immoderation and demonization of the other. He alleges:

> "They [the 'fatwa wars'] culminated in a number of fatwas[275] published by Ahmad Reza Khan Barelwi (d. 1340/1921) of the *takfir* of major Deobandi ulema of his times such as Muhammad Qasim Nanotwi (d. 1297/1879), Rashid Ahmad Gangohi (d. 1323/1905), Khalil Ahmad Saharanpuri (d. 1346/1927), Ashraf Ali Thanwi (d. 1362/1943), and indeed, of anyone who did not consider them *kafirs*- fatwas which have cast their long shadows down to your own times.

Exalted, created was the light of your Prophet from His light, and that light remained in the midst of His power for as long as He wished, and there was not at that time a Tablet or a Pen or a Paradise or a Fire or an angel or a heaven or an earth. And when God, the Sublime and Exalted, wished to create creation, He divided that light into four parts, and from the first He made the Pen, from the second the Tablet, from the third the Throne, and from the fourth evertything else'" (*The Creed of Imam al-Tahawi*, 117). This is a sound hadith related by Jabir ؓ in the *Musannaf* of al-Hafiz Abu Bakr 'Abd al-Razzaq b. Hammam al-San'ani ؓ (Ibid.).

[274] *Thesis*, 4:88-89.

[275] A'la Hadrat ؓ only issued **one** fatwa of kufr against the Deobandi Shaykhs, namely, *Al-Mo'tamad Al-Mustanad* (written in 1320 A.H./1902 C.E.), and republished in 1323 A.H./1905 C.E. within *Husam al-Haramayn*, which was endorsed by 33 top-ranking scholars and muftis from Mecca and Medinah. *Tamheedul Iman* provides the rational behind the fatwa of kufr and answers many of the false accusations that the scholars of Deoband brought against Imam Ahmed Raza ؓ. It would be redundant to issue multiple "fatwas" of kufr, as Keller alleges in the above quote, when **a fatwa of *takfir*** is enough.

> In comparison, no Deobandi scholar of note, to the author's knowledge, has yet made *takfir* of Barelwis[276]."

Isn't Rashid Ahmad Gangohi a Deobandi scholar of note? In *Fatawa Rashidiyya* (3:16), he condemned: "The one saying *kafir* to Mawlawi Isma'il Dihlawi, the writer of *Taqwiyat al-Iman*, is himself a *kafir*!" The Deobandi Shaykh issued this verdict in utter disregard to the fatwa of *kufr* published in *Tahqeeq al-Fatwa fi Ibtal al-Taghwa* (1240 A.H./1822 C.E.) by 'Allama Fazle Haq Khairabadī ؓ (d. 1861). His fatwa was endorsed by **seventeen** leading scholars of the *Ahle Sunnat wal Jama'at*[277]. Subsequent generations followed their example by refuting *Taqwiyat al-Iman* for its statements of *kufr* including Imam Ahmed Raza ؓ. In effect, Gangohi made *takfir* of 17 Barelwi scholars (a.k.a. Sunni Hanafis) and their followers when he issued this desparate verdict. He exhibited fierce loyalty to Dihlawi, instead of aligning his beliefs with the *Ahle Sunnat wal Jama'at*. Khalil Ahmad also attempted to issue the verdict of *takfir* against Mawlana Salamat-Ullah Rampuri ؓ (an *Ahle Sunnat* scholar), but failed[278]. According to Dr. Usha Sanyal, a historian specializing in South Asia and Islam:

> "Khalil Ahmad Ambethwi, the Deobandi scholar who had preceded Ahmad Riza to Mecca and had been trying to get a fatwa declaring an Indian scholar to be an unbeliever (kufr) because of his belief in the Prophet's knowledge of the unseen, had to leave Mecca two weeks after his arrival because, Metcalf says, some people 'objected to his visit.' Back in India, the Deobandis got busy writing fatwa of their own responding to

[276] Nuh Keller, "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir."

[277] The compiler wishes to thank Shabnam Jilani for reading this verdict to the compiler. A scan of this Urdu fatwa is available at http://www.falaah.co.uk/refutation/wahabi/94-fatwa-upon-ismail-dehalvi-.html.

[278] Amina Baraka, *A Tribute to Shaikhal-Islam As-Shaikh Imam Ahmad Raza* (Stockport: Raza Academy, 2005), 124-125.

> Ahmad Riza 'point by point,' leading to what Metcalf calls a 'fatwa war' (Metcalf, 1982: 310)[279]."

Additionally, the Deobandi scholars were vehement about issuing verdicts of *bid'a* (innovation) and *shirk* (polytheism). There is absolutely no *bid'a* or *shirk* in the beliefs or practices of the *Ahle Sunnat*. It is a serious crime to falsely condemn a Muslim of *shirk* (polytheism) because if someone is a *mushirk* (polytheist) than, ipso facto[280], he is a *kafir* (unbeliever). These unwarranted rulings by the Deobandis promoted their followers to brand as "mushirk" and "kafir" the rank and file of Muslims. It is reported in the *Sahih Hadith* that anyone who calls a Muslim a *kafir*, will become one himself[281]. In *Husam al-Haramayn*, A'la Hadrat ﵁ made references to the Prophet's ﷺ predictions about the Last Days in light of what was happening on the Subcontinent. He ﵁ said:

> "The Sunnite Muslim is so patient for his religion as if a keeper of fire in his palm[282]."

And similarly,

> "The state of time is the same as the most truthful and the believed one (blessings of Allah be upon him) has informed that a man shall get up early in the morning as a believer and go

[279] Usha Sanyal, *Ahmad Riza Khan Barelwi: In the Path of the Prophet*, 108-109.
[280] Literally, "by the fact itself," which means a certain effect is a direct consequence of the action in question.
[281] "Rasoolullah ﷺ states, 'Whoever calls his Muslim brother a *kafir*, then one of them definitely returns as a *kafir*' (Bukhari, Muslim). Meaning, if the person called a *kafir* is truly a *kafir*, nothing is wrong. If he is not, then the person who called him a *kafir* becomes one himself," see Taajush Shari'ah, Mufti Mohammed Akhtar Raza Khan Azhari al-Qadri , *A Collection of Verdicts from Majmua Fatawa* (Durban: Habibi Darul Ifta, 2008), tr. Mufti Omar Dawood Qadiri Chisti Moeeni, 34.
[282] Anas ﵁ related that the Prophet ﷺ said: "There will come a time for people that to hold onto one's religion would be like holding a hot coal in one's hands," see Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani , *The Approach of Armageddon?*, 93.

to sleep as a disbeliever or shall go to sleep as a believer and get up early in the morning as a disbeliever[283]. God forbid, therefore, warning upon the blasphemy of these concealed disbelievers is necessary to be given in the name of Islam, and there is no strength and power save Allah[284]."

The Deobandi scholars unwarranted fatawa of *kufr*, *bid'a* and *shirk* inconjunction with their unrepentant attitude is the source of divisiveness, immoderation and demonization of the other- *not* the fatwa of apostasy by the great Mujaddid ﷺ for defending, warning, and educating the Ummah solely for the sake of Almighty Allah and His Beloved Prophet ﷺ. The *Ahle Sunnat* recommended disassociation for the layman and passed the death sentence[285] against these *four* men to ensure the safety of the Ummah. The purpose of excommunication is to make the sinner acutely aware of his sin, which the Deobandi Ulama (past and present) desparately need!

The Real Position of the Ahle Sunnat wal Jama'at

The Chief Qadi of Bundi, Rajasthan (India), Hadrat Mawlana Chaman Qadri[286] warns the *Ahle-Sunnat* to avoid the writings of Deobandi scholars and any works which reference their writings. He encourages the Ummah to seek knowledge from A'la Hadrat ﷺ and scholars of his ilk. He comments:

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283 Abu Musa al-Ash'ari ﷺ related that the Prophet ﷺ said: "Before, the Last Hour there will be afflications like patches of a dark night in which a man will be a believer in the morning and an unbeliever in the evening, or a believer in the evening and an unbeliever in the morning," see Ibid., 189.

284 Imam Ahmad Raza, *Hussam al-Haramayn*, tr. Alhaaj Bashir Hussain Nazim, available from http://www.razanw.org/modules/products/item.php?itemid=1.

285 Since the 1860s, Islamic criminal law ceased to be applied in British India. This enabled the Deobandis to write with unprecedented liberty and total impunity.

286 Hadrat Mawlana Chaman Qadri has received certificates of authorization from the son of A'la Hadrzat ﷺ, namely, Huzoor Mufti-e-Azam Hind ﷺ of Bareilly Shareef; as well as from Huzoor Pir Mohammad Ibrahim Sahib ﷺ of Baghdad Shareef. He is the spiritual heir of his paternal uncle, Hadrat Muzaffar Ali Sahib ﷺ, of Rajasthan (India) and Huzoor Pir Ibrahim Baghdadi ﷺ.

> "The Deobandis have deliberately tried to lower the stature of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and their writings are extremely dangerous. While an innocent person may start out reading with an open mind quite unsuspectingly, he will soon enough corrupt his faith. Such writings are very insidiously and subtly laden with worms that most people can never detect. Deobandi writings *may seem* pretty traditional but they have subtly made imperceptible changes which cause the greatest damage to one's Iman. The result is that in no time one's Iman is corrupted because Satan, the accursed, aids in such destructive work."

Hadrat Mawlana Chaman Qadri reinforced that Deobandi writers, namely, Muhammad Qasim Nanotwi (d.1879), Rashid Ahmad Gangohi (d. 1905), Khalil Ahmad Saharanpuri (d. 1927), Ashraf Ali Thanwi (d. 1943) and those who esteem them *will* corrupt your Iman. The reality of his words can be seen in "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir." Hadrat Sahib followed the guidance of the *Ahle Sunnat*, which is to disassociate oneself from those who insult the Beloved of Allah ﷺ.

The reader can decide for himself whether to follow the Prophet of Allah ﷺ, the noble Sahaba and the illustrious Taba'een ؓ, or the notorious Wahhabi-Deobandi sect.

FALLACIES

Nuh Keller is arguing beside the point in "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir[287]." He substitutes A'la Hadzat's ﷺ real position (probable possibility) with a superficially similar proposition, "imputed intentionality." He then attacks it to create the illusion of having refuted *Husam al-Haramayn*. His essay is based on the following irrelevant grounds: *argumentum ad hominem* (literally, an "argument to the man")[288] and *argumentum ad ignorantiam*, which "sounds convincing to others because they are ignorant of the weakness of the argument and of the facts that stand against it[289]."

Argumentum ad hominem

Nuh Keller wrongly accuses A'la Hadrat ﷺ of being unaware and ignorant of the the great Jurists of Islam and their rulings, namely, Imam Haskafi ﷺ and Imam Subki ﷺ. He *insinuates* that Imam Ahmed Raza ﷺ failed to follow the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ by not giving due consideration to the intention behind the offense and the emotions aroused. He incorrectly alleges that the august Mujaddid mistranslates Grangohi's doctrine *due to* "honest misaprrehension" or "misunderstanding the resultant nuance in Arabic." Knowledge of Arabic, the principles of jurisprudence, *Durr al-Mukhtar* and *Radd al-Muhtar* is essential for an Islamic scholar so the clear

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[287] "This fallacy arises from falsely assuming that the point at issue has been disproved when one merely resembling it has been disproved; the point really at issue is consequently ignored. *Ignoratio elenchi* means ignorance of the nature of refutation… To establish some orther conclusion is to dodge the issue and to argue beside the point," see Sister Miriam Joseph, *The Trivium: The Liberal Arts of Logic, Grammar, and Rhetoric* (Philadelphia: Paul Dry Books, 2002), 202.

[288] This fallacy "confuses the point at issue with the people concerned. Attacks on the character and conduct of people and personal abuse or praise are substituted for reasoning on the point at issue. Argumentum ad hominem seeks to persuade by unsound *ethos*. In rhetoric *ethos* means establishing the speaker or writer as one worthy of making an argument," see Ibid., 202.

[289] Ibid., 202-203.

intention behind such a vicious personal attack is to defame and damage Imam Ahmed Raza's رضي الله عنه authority as a jurist.

Keller mires his own reputation by engaging in such uncouth mudslinging. Assuredly those who knew A'la Hadrat رضي الله عنه found him to be "a mountain of knowledge and excellence." The famous Arab scholar and Qadi, Maulana Allamah Sayyid Marzooqi Abul Hussain رضي الله عنه, eulogized the august Mujaddid رضي الله عنه in *Husam al-Haramayn*. The venerable Qadi of Mecca wrote:

> "**The Divine favour provided me an opportunity of meeting with him [Imam Ahmed Raza Khan].** His perfections and attributes, which I had heard from other Ulama, were, indeed, more than the narration. My tongue is not in a position to state them. I found him a mountain of knowledge and excellence. The minarets of his light are very lofty. He is such a river of knowledge and gnosis, whereupon thousand canals of religious issues overflow and go on saturating the brain of the knowledge seekers. Today several astray people are making unsuccessful efforts to stop them. When he speaks on theological issues, he seems to be a flowing river. He has complete knowledge of jurisprudence, inheritance and speculative knowledge [*kalam*]. He states Mustahabbat, Sunan, Wajibat and Fraiz with full power of religious knowledge. **He is an adept of [the] Arabic language**[290]."

This is the euglogy of a Hanafi scholar whose mother-tongue is Arabic. He personally met A'la Hadrat رضي الله عنه and endorsed the fatwa of apostasy. Unlike Keller, he found Imam Ahmed Raza's Arabic to be superb and rightly so as we are about to see.

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[290] Imam Ahmad Raza رضي الله عنه, *Hussam al-Haramayn*, tr. Alhaaj Bashir Hussain Nazim, available from http://www.razanw.org/modules/products/item.php?itemid=1. Bold is the compiler's emphasis.

Mistranslation & Misapprehension

Observe carefully Nuh Keller's shrewd defense of Gangohi:

> "Unfortunately for Muslim unity in India, Gangohi's concept of the *jawaz 'aqli* or 'hypothetical possibility' of God's lying was mistakenly translated into Arabic by Ahmad Reza Khan as *imkan al-kadhib*[291], which in Arabic means the 'factual possibility of [God's] lying' (*Husam al-Haramayn* (c00), 19)—a position that neither Rashid Ahmad Gangohi nor any other Muslim holds, for it is unbelief[292]."

In the above quote Keller himself admits that *imkan al-kadhib* is **"unbelief" (kufr)** [293]. He also agrees that there is consensus on this issue. It might dishearten him to learn that Khalil Ahmad Sharanpuri and Rashid Ahmad Gangohi endorsed this position in *Baraheen-e-Qatiah*. The former writes:

> "The proposition of [God's] contrariety to [His] promise(s) (*khalf al-wa'id*) is subject to disagreement amongst the ancients (early scholars of Islam). [Even] the question of [God's] potentiality of lying (***imkan al-kidhb***) is not a contemporary

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[291] Shaykh Faizan ul-Mustafa addresses the argument on *imkan al-kadhib* in his scholarly treatise "A Just Response to the Biased Author." The Barelwi Alim unravels the semantic knot that Keller attempts to tie. This essay is available from http://www.gatewaytomadina.org/articles/A_Just_Reply_To_A_Biased_Author.pdf, 19-24.

[292] Nuh Keller, "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir."

[293] Leading Sunni scholars are actively refuting *imkan al-kadhib*, such as Sayyidi Taajush Shari'ah, Mufti Akhtar Ridha Khan in his "Question on Imkan al-Kadhib" (http://www.gatewaytomadina.org/articles/Imkan_Question_TaajushShariah.pdf), Shaykh Gibril F. Haddad in his book review of *Taqwiyat al-Īmān* (http://mac.abc.se/~onesr/d/tqi_e.pdf), Shaykh Abu Adam al Naruiji in his "Refuting the Accusation that Asharis Consider it Rationally Possible for Allah to Lie" (http://sunnianswers.wordpress.com/2008/07/15/refuting-the-accusation-that-asharis-consider-it-rationally-possible-for-allah-to-lie/), and Shaykh Monawwar Ateeq to name but a few.

> issue, but has rather been disputed by the ancients--is [God's] potential for falsification possible or not? Hence it is stated in al-Dur al-Mukhtar: 'Apparently the Ash'aris accept the belief in [the possibility of God's] contradiction of [His] promise(s). This is because they don't see [that belief] as a [divine] flaw/imperfection, but conceive of it as [a sign of God's] forgiveness and mercy[294].'"

Again, he reiterated their position on page 274 and said:

> "This is the meaning of ***imkan al-kidhb*** (the possibility of lying) that Allah Ta`ala has the power to lie, but this will not happen[295]."

A few issues emerge from the aforementioned quotes. First, the Deobandis clearly endorsed *imkan al-kadhib* in *Baraheen-e-Qatiah*! The Arabic word كذب (*kidhb*) means lie, lying, falsehood and so forth; the corresponding Urdu phrase is *imkan-i kizb*. There are numerous ways to transliterate this word and phrase, such as imkan al-kadhib/imkan al-kidhb/imkan-i kizb. English-speaking Muslims can rest assured that *imkan al-kidhb* = *imkan al-kadhib*. The words in question in the context of Keller's own remarks are one and the same, i.e. *imkan* or "possibility," *–al–* or "of," and *kidhb/kadhib* or "lying." One will also notice that the word "factual" is inexplicably missing from this Arabic phrase! Keller is guilty of misapprehension, not Imam Ahmed Raza ﷺ.

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[294] Khalil Ahmad Saharanpuri, *Baraheen-e-Qatiah* (Deoband: Kutub Khana Imdadiya, n.d.), 6. The compiler wishes to thank Sohaib Ibrahim Khan, a graduate student in Religious Studies at Duke University, for translating this passage from a scan of the original book. He suggested I employ the Arabic transliteration rule (imkan al-kidhb) since it is more widely known than its Urdu equivalent (imkan-i kizb). Bold is the compiler's emphasis.

[295] Khalil Ahmad Saharanpuri, *Baraheen-e-Qatiah* (Deoband: Kutub Khana Imdadiya, n.d.), 274. Bold is the compiler's emphasis.

After establishing the facts our second issue emerges, namely, A'la Hadrat ﵀ faithfully translated their printed works with utmost care and caution. Accordingly, Alhaaj Bashir Hussain Nazim in his English translation of *Husam al-Haramayn* writes: "Rashid Ahmad Gangohi says firstly, in emulation of Ismail Dehlavi, that the doctrine of **possibility of lie** is applicable to the Being of Allah the Eternal[296]." On the other hand, Nuh Keller has altered the text by adding the word **"factual"** to his English translation. This creates an artificial distinction between Gangohi's alleged concept and Imam Ahmed Raza's Arabic translation! This is an addition (or rather an interpolation) that was not made by the author of *Husam al-Haramayn*, and enables Keller to **falsely** charge A'la Hadrat ﵀ as follows:

> "Whether this mistranslation was due to Ahmad Reza Khan's honest misapprehension of Gangohi's position, **or directly carrying into Arabic a similar Urdu phrase**[297] without understanding the resultant nuance in Arabic, or some other reason, is not clear[298]."

One thing is clear, Nuh Keller seeks to persuade by an unsound *ethos*. It is legitimate to say so because he is willing to resort to considerable literary manipulation and chicanery in Gangohi's defense. To attribute a lack of "understanding" in linguistic nuances to a scholar of A'la Hadrat's ﵀ repute reeks of condescension and arrogance or plain negligence!

Hollow Praise

After deliberately adulterating *Husam al-Haramayn*, Keller cheekily offers hollow praise to Imam Ahmed Raza ﵀ for committing a sincere mistake:

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[296] Imam Ahmad Raza ﵀, *Hussam al-Haramayn*, tr. Alhaaj Bashir Hussain Nazim, available from http://www.razanw.org/modules/products/item.php?itemid=1, 51/149 (pdf version).

[297] Might Keller be alluding to ***imkan-i kizb***? And if so, why did he avoid quoting the phrase in question, which he seems to know so much about?

[298] Nuh Keller, "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir." Bold is the compiler's emphasis.

> “This mistaken construing of Gangohi’s position in turn became the basis for Ahmad Reza’s declaring that Gangohi was a *kafir*, nicknaming those who subscribed with him to this view *Wahhabiyya Kadhdhabiyya* or ‘Liar Wahhabis,’ and giving the tragic fatwa that all who did not consider Gangohi to be a *kafir* themselves became *kafir*.
>
> Muslims can rest easy about this fatwa because it is simply mistaken. The fatwa’s deductions are wrong because its premises are based on inaccurate observation and inattention to needful logical distinctions that exculpate Gangohi from the charge of *kufr*—even if we do not accept the latter’s conclusions. So while Ahmad Reza should be regarded as sincere in his convictions, in his own eyes defending the religion of Islam, and morally blameless, he did get his facts wrong, and it is clearly inadmissible for Muslims to follow him in his mistake, even if made out of sincerity[299].”

Nuh Keller declared *imkan al-kadhib* to be **“unbelief” (kufr)**, which is why he tactically **avoids** quoting the founder of Darul Uloom Deoband in “Iman, Kufr, and Takfir.” His entire case or *argumentum ad hominem* is baseless and irrelevant. Alhamdulillah! Not only was Imam Ahmed Raza ﷺ sincere, but he was also right. The august Mujaddid accurately and attentively recorded their errant statements. He did not bear false witness or commit the fallacy of hearsay evidence. The inimitable Quran says:

> **﴾Those who do wrong will come to know by what a (great) reverse they will be overturned!﴿ (26:227)**

[299] Nuh Keller, “Iman, Kufr, and Tafir.”

Students of sacred knowledge wishing to further study this subject should refer to “The Truth About A Lie: A Refutation of the claim that falsehood is included in Divine Power” by Shaykh Abu Hasan al-Ridawi. This book is a must read and includes extracts from *Subhaan us-Subooh*, a primer on Kalām terminology, what Sharif Al-Jurjānī said, and the official statement of Shaykh Ramađān Al-Būṭī that falsehood is intrinsically impossible for Allah ﷻ[300].

Subjective Opinions

Nuh Keller falsely accuses A’la Hadrat ؓ of ignoring “this crucial legal distinction,” i.e. his fraudulent argument and ultimately blames the august Mujaddid ؓ for unleashing in India the greatest Wahhabi *bid’a* of all, *takfir* of fellow Muslims. He writes:

> “Imputed intentionality is a fallacy because the rigorously authenticated proofs we have seen are too clear to misunderstand that sometimes offense may be given to Allah or His messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace) that was not originally intended as an offense—and is therefore without the legal consequences it would have had if it had been intentional. The fatwas of Ahmad Reza Barelwi about the Deobandis are mistaken because they ignore this crucial legal distinction.”

Further he says:

> “To conclude, the Barelwi response to the Deobandis was probably far worse than the initial provocation, raising for the first time in Indian history the banner of *takfir* of one major group of Hanafi Muslims by another. The sad irony in this was

[300] Shaykh Abu Hasan al-Ridawi, “The Truth About A Lie: A Refutation of the claim that falsehood is included in Divine Power,” accessed on 16 June 2010; available from http://www.gatewaytomadina.org/articles/Truth_About_A_Lie_v_1_0.pdf, 85.

> that the greatest Wahhabi *bid'a* of all, *takfir* of fellow Muslims, was unleashed in India by denunciations of 'Wahhabism.' Ahmad Reza's fatwas depicted his opponents as 'Wahhabi sects,' which his latter-day followers came to declare all Deobandis to belong to through a sort of 'guilt by association.'"

The greatest Wahhabi *bid'a* of all is Muhammad ibn 'Abd Wahhab's (1703-1792) accussed writings, such as *Kitab al-Tawhid*, that poisoned the Muslims understanding of their religion and the Sunni doctrine of pure Monotheism. His corrupt beliefs enabled him to make *takfir* of fellow Muslims on the basis of what he wrongly perceived as *shirk* and *bid'a*! He was a fierce reformer that sought to destroy the religion itself and build it anew[301], which is why he persecuted the *Ahle Sunnat* and held that shedding their blood was lawful! Ismail Dihlawi (1771-1831) introduced this deviant Aqida to the Subcontient in the form of scholarly treatises like *Taqwiyat al-Iman*, *Idah al-Haqq*, and *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*. His writings form the basis of Wahhabism in that country[302]. There is a stark contrast between the ruling of apostasy by a qualified jurist and that perpetrated by the Wahhabi/"Salafi" sect.

Takfir is not an innovation[303]! A mufti (Islamic judge) has the right and responsibility to pass the verdict of *takfir* in order to distinguish between *kufr* and *iman*. Even if a mufti is mistaken in his verdict of *takfir*, this in no way means he has committed *bid'a*! Yet Nuh Keller impiles that A'la Hadrat ﷺ is responsible for unleashing the *bid'a* of *takfir* in India. He is insinuating that the august Mujaddid ﷺ is a *mubtadi* (innovator) of the

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[301] Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, *Encyclopedia of Islamic Doctrine: Beliefs* (Mountain View: As-Sunna Foundation of America, 1998), 1:191.
[302] Shaykh Gibril F Haddad, "Book Review of *Taqwiyat al-Iman: Strengthening of the Faith*," available from http://mac.abc.se/home/onesr/d/tqi_e.pdf.
[303] Shaykh Gibril F Haddad, "Takfir – Anathematizing" (September 14, 2005), accessed on 24 December 2009; available from http://qa.sunnipath.com/issue_view.asp?HD=1&ID=216&CATE=13.

Subcontinent! Keller neglects to mention that if condemning a Muslim (takfir) is *bid'a* then the 'Ulama from the Arab world and the Subcontinent that endorsed *Husam al-Haramayn* would also be guilty of this charge. Moreover, all the jurists of Islam who in the past have issued a fatwa of kufr, would now, according to Keller's drivel be categorized as innovators. For instance, Hadrat Junayd al-Baghdadi ﷺ was obliged in his capacity as Chief Judge of Baghdad to sign the warrant authorising the execution of al-Hallaj ﷺ. This illustrious Sufi Shaykh ﷺ did not shy away from his duty, nor did his disciple begrudge the Sacred Law. Hadrat Mansur al-Hallaj ﷺ was executed for saying, "I am the Truth!" While Rashid Ahmad Gangohi lived in silence affirming that Allah can lie. In effect Keller has wrongly blamed the *Ahle Sunnat wal Jama'at* of innovation in his futile effort to exonerate the Deobandi Shaykhs! Prima facie, the rule is that whatever is *bid'a* will always be *bid'a* no matter who it applies to[304]. Likewise, if it is *bid'a* for Imam Ahmed Raza ﷺ; than it will also be *bid'a* for the 301 'Ulama that endorsed the fatwa of apostasy against these *four* men!

The ruling of apostasy may seem harsh. But it only applies in extreme cases. Disparaging the Prophet ﷺ is the *worst* form of unbelief by scholarly consensus[305]. Excommunication is a blessing and protection for the Ummah. It serves to demarcate the Saved Group from those sects that have gone astray. The takfir of a qualified jurist is halal (lawful), while disrespecting Allah's Beloved Prophet ﷺ is haram (unlawful). Sacrificing Iman for the sake and love of *four* men leads to damnation; it is a *very* serious crime. Yet "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir" attempts to make the halal haram and the haram halal. It is an inversion of the Companions' saying, "May my father and my mother be sacrificed for you ﷺ!" 'Awf ibn Malik al-Ashja'i ﷺ reported that the Prophet ﷺ said:

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[304] "The rule is that whatever is Shirk will always be Shirk no matter who it applies to. Likewise, if it is not Shirk for one, then it will also not be Shirk for others," refer to *Beacons of Hope* by A'la Hadrat ﷺ.

[305] *Thesis*, 4:140-143.

> "My Community [*Umma*] will split up into seventy-three sects, and the sect that will cause the greatest mischief for my Community will be the one made up of people who use their own subjective opinions [*ra'y*] as the standard by which to assess affairs. They will declare what is lawful to be illegal [*yuharrimuna'l-halal*], and they will legitimize that which is unlawful [*yuhalliluna'l-haram*][306]."

Fallacious Fallacies

Nuh Keller constructs the entire apologetic around the following fallacies, which he imputes to Imam Ahmed Raza ﷺ and Hanafi Barelwis. The following paragraph appears right before the THE FALLACY OF HEARSAY EVIDENCE. He writes:

> "These legal criteria, with the foregoing parts of this essay, reveal a number of fallacies in the reckless charges of unbelief bandied about in our times, providing even stronger reason for Muslims to avoid them and **the groups** enamored with them. Let us now look more closely at three examples of fallacies of *takfir* all too common in the present day: (1) the fallacy of hearsay evidence, (2) the fallacy of imputed intentionality, and (3) the fallacy of guilt by association[307]."

Keller uses the word **"groups"** even though the foregoing parts of his essay *only* address Imam Ahmad Raza's fatwa. Thus, **"the groups"** Keller had in mind are Hanafi Barelwis a.k.a. Sunnis! Since we have already proven the fallaciousness of the first two fallacies, we shall now turn our attention to the fallacy of guilt by association. "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir" alleges that the fatwa of apostasy is an unjust fallacy since ﴾**No bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another**﴿ **(Qur'an 6:164)**. By the consensus of the

[306] *Sufficient Provision for Seekers of the Path of Truth*, 1: 393.
[307] Nuh Keller, "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir." Bold is the compiler's emphasis.

believers only Muhammad Qasim Nanotwi, Rashid Ahmad Gangohi, Khalil Ahmad Saharanpuri and Ashraf Ali Thanwi are apostate, disbelievers. That said, it has also been clearly stated in the reliable books of Fiqh that "whosoever has doubt in their blasphemy and chastisement, becomes [a] disbeliever himself[308]." A prominent scholar of the Ahle Sunnat, Mawlānā Sayyid Ahmad Sa'eed Kazmi Amrohawi (Anwar-ul-Uloom, Multan) clarifies our position:

> "**On the issue of Takfeer [ruling someone as an apostate], our stance has always been that, whosoever utters words of Kufr we shall not refrain from pronouncing Takfeer against them**; **whether they be Deobandi or Barelwi, follower of the League or the Congress, Nechari [naturalists] or Nadwi.** On this issue we shall not differentiate whether someone is a friend or a foe.
>
> This certainly does mean that if one follower of the League utters a word of Kufr, all the followers of the League are Kafir; or if one Nadwi committed Kufr that all Nadwis are apostates. We do not declare all the residents of Deoband as Kafirs due to passages of Kufr written by some Deobandis.
>
> **We and our elders have repeatedly said that we do not decree any resident of Deoband or Lucknow as a kafir just because they live there.** According to us, only that person is a kafir who commits insults against Allah, His Prophets and the chosen people of Allah and despite repeated warnings, does not repent. **We also consider those people to be kafir who are aware of such Kufr and are aware of the clear meanings of**

[308] Imam Ahmad Raza ﷺ, *Hussam al-Haramayn*, tr. Alhaaj Bashir Hussain Nazim, available from http://www.razanw.org/modules/products/item.php?itemid=1.

these insults, and despite this they consider the insults to be the truth, the insulter to be a believer and their leader.

And that is it.

Apart from this, we do not declare anyone who claims to be a Muslim as an apostate. **The number of people we have ruled as apostates are very few in number and restricted [to a specific issue]. Apart from these specific individuals, no Muslim from Deoband or Bareilly is termed an apostate.** Neither are [Muslim] followers of the League or the Congress. We consider all Muslims to be exactly that – Muslims" (Al-Haq al-Mubeen, page 24-25. Multan – 'Allama Ahmad Sa'eed Kazmi)[309].

It is stated in *Fataawa Bazzaziyyah*, *Durar wa Ghurar*, *Fataawa Khayriyyah*, *Durr al-Mukhtar* and *Majma' al-Anhur* that: "**He who doubted in such a person (he, whose Kufr is obvious) and the fact that such a person would be tormented (Adhaabihi) has committed Kufr[310].**" If this is a fallacy, then the authors of these books are guilty as charged. This includes Imam Haskafi ﵀ for his *Durr al-Mukhtar*! But Nuh Keller disregards the aforementioned books of Fiqh. He asserts that:

"A Muslim's membership in a particular group or sect is not legal evidence that he is a *kafir* even when the tenets of the group include ideas that are *kufr*. One enters one's grave alone, and is only responsible for one's own beliefs, not those of

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[309] Mawlana Yaseen Akhtar Misbahi, *AHLU'S SUNNAH WA'L JAMA'AH AN INTRODUCTION*, tr. Muhammad Aqdas, accessed on 13 September 2009; available from http://www.freewebs.com/barelwi/IntroToAhlusSunnah.pdf, 17. Bold is the compiler's emphasis.

[310] Shaykh Gibril F Haddad, "Takfir – Anathematizing" (September 14, 2005), accessed on 4 January 2009; available from http://qa.sunnipath.com/issue_view.asp?HD=1&ID=216&CATE=13.

others, although one is obliged to inform them of the truth when they are wrong on a religious matter[311]."

This is true *only if* the members of a particular sect **do not** share the beliefs of their founder(s), which is *highly improbable*. For instance, do Qadianis/Ahmadis **doubt** the prophethood of their founder? No. The Deobandis, however, conceal their enormity and confuse the masses. They are unique in this regard. This deception on the part of their leaders **does not** nullify their *kufr*. In point of fact, it only serves to needlessly fan the flames of communal animosity and division. Contrary to what Keller might think, "Ibn Aabideen himself says in his Uquud ad-Durriyyah (vol.1/page.92) when asked 'what is the ruling (fatwa) regarding the RafiDis[312]?' replies: 'They are Kaafirs for they have collected (Jama'uu) different kinds of Kufr (in their beliefs) and he who withholds (tawaqqafa) pronouncing the ruling that they are Kaafirs is himself a Kaafir'[313]."

Nota bene: When *Ahle Sunnat* scholars issue a fatwa of apostasy against a sect within Islam, they have to make **a default assumption** that *all* their adherents subscribe to the views of their founder(s) since it is impossible to investigate the individual actions and beliefs of every follower. As a result, individuals belonging to a particular sect are grouped together in rulings pertaining to: prayer, marriage, and association. If the scholars and muftis do not make this assumption then they will be misleading the public. The 'Ulama of Sunni Islam are merely warning the Ummah about that sect! Here is an example from the Hanafi Fiqh Staff at SunniPath Academy:

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[311] Nuh Keller, "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir." Underline is the compiler's emphasis.

[312] "The Rafida [the Deserters or Rebels] were so called because of their rejection [*rafd*] of the majority of the Companions, and their refusal to accept the Imamate of Abu Bakr and 'Umar (may Allah be well pleased with them both)" (*Sufficient Provision for Seekers of the Path of Truth*, 1:409). Rafidis are included among the Shia. They split into no fewer than 14 subsects (Ibid., 1:411).

[313] Shaykh Gibril F Haddad, "Takfir – Anathematizing" (September 14, 2005), accessed on 4 January 2009; available from http://qa.sunnipath.com/issue_view.asp?HD=1&ID=216&CATE=13.

> "Question: Can a Sunni marry an Ismaili? A Shia?
>
> Answer: Isma`ilis are not considered to be within the fold of Islam. Even a cursory glance at their beliefs and practices makes it clear that they negate matters that are necessarily known to be of the religion of Islam[314]."

Still more clearly, Shaykh Muhammad ibn Adam al-Kawthari writes:

> "Shaykh Faraz Rabbani mentioned in a previous answer that 'there is scholarly consensus (ijma`) that **Ismailis are not Muslims** because of their denial of numerous things that are established by decisive texts of the Qur'an and Sunna, and are known to be necessary parts of Islam. As such, it is not valid to marry an Ismaili man or woman.' **Thus, Ismailis are not close to our faith and one would severely hinder his relationship with his Lord by deciding to marry one[315]**."

According to Nuh Keller's logic Faraz Rabbani and Muhammad ibn Adam have just committed the fallacy of guilt by association. Why didn't these scholars give due consideration to the individual followers in question before categorizing the whole community as non-Muslims? They included **"an Ismaili man or woman"** with that sect because "the tenets of the group include ideas that are *kufr*!" Their fatawa contradict Nuh Keller's argument that "a Muslim's membership in a particular group or sect is not legal evidence that he is a *kafir*." So Faraz Rabbani and Muhammad ibn Adam

[314] "Can a Sunni marry an Ismaili? A Shia?" (July 27, 2005), accessed on 20 September 2009; available from http://qa.sunnipath.com/issue_view.asp?HD=12&ID=3035&CATE=10.

[315] Shaykh Muhammad ibn Adam al-Kawthari, "Is it valid to marry an Ismaili?" (January 20, 2007), accessed on 20 September 2009; available from http://qa.sunnipath.com/issue_view.asp?HD=12&ID=12350&CATE=10.

can declare Ismailis (a group among the Shia) to be non-Muslims. But if A'la Hadrat ﷺ passes this ruling (*takir*) against the Deobandi Shaykhs he is somehow guilty of committing a fallacy. Absurd!

When citing a fatwa by a Barelwi Alim on the permissibility of marriage between a Sunni man (Zayd) and a Deobandi woman Nuh Keller deliberately ignores the rules of apostasy. In his desperate attempt to instigate the Muslims against A'la Hadrat ﷺ, he contends that a Hanafi Muslim man may marry a Jewish or Christian woman, but not a Hanafi Muslim woman from a Deobandi family because the Deobandis remain guilty until proven innocent. He then writes, "This is not a fatwa, but a social problem[316]." If this is true, then the same should be said to the Hanafi Fiqh Staff at SunniPath Academy.

Here is a simple question with an easy answer: Is a Sunni man permitted to marry an Ismaili woman?   No. He cannot marry an Ismaili woman because the scholars of Sunni Islam regard this sect to be outside the pale of Islam, which means the woman falls into the category of an apostate unbeliever in all such matters by default.

Now, a Sunni man can marry an Ismaili woman if she and her household wants to become Sunni. If they are firm on the way of the *Ahle Sunnat*, then their marriage is permissible. But in that case, he will be marrying a Sunni—not an Ismaili! **It should also be noted that if the Deobandi woman is unaware of their insulting words then she is not someone who is ruled a Deobandi[317].** Many Sunnis have only recently "converted" to the Deobandi school *due to* the efforts of its missionary society, Tablighi Jama'at[318].

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316 Nuh Keller, "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir."

317 Mawlana Yaseen Akhtar Misbahi, *AHLU'S SUNNAH WA'L JAMA'AH AN INTRODUCTION*, tr. Muhammad Aqdas, accessed on 13 September 2009; available from http://www.freewebs.com/barelwi/IntroToAhlusSunnah.pdf, 18.

318 Muhammad Ilyas (1885-1944) is the founder of Tablighi Jama'at. He stayed with **Rashid Ahmad Gangohi** at an impressionable age for 9 years and was permitted to take

Obviously, Nuh Keller cannot admit that their insults are true so he begins with the premise that their insults are valid! If these insults are valid, then the rules of apostasy *do not* apply.

His illustration about a Hanafi Muslim man being permitted to marry a Jewish or Christian woman, but not a Hanafi Muslim woman from a Deoband family is a perfect example of this. Keller deliberately emphasizes the words "Hanafi Muslim" to reinforce his erroneous analogy. Simultaneously, he ignores the fact that the Deobandi woman belongs to an apostate sect. Hanafi is a school of Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), while Sunni Islam is our religion or sect. Suffice it to say that even Wahhabis call themselves Hanbalis, but that doesn't make them Sunnis[319]!

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bay'ah at the founder's hand. In 1908 he went to Deoband where he studied the *Jami'* of Imam Tirmidhi and *Sahih Bukhari* from Mahmud al-Hasan Deobandi. He was also among the famous disciples of **Ashraf Ali Thanwi**. After Gangohi's death **Khalil Ahmad Saharanpuri** became his Sufi Shaykh. Tablighi Jama'at follows the Deobandi school of thought. What is the proof of this? The first three Amirs (leaders) of Tablighi Jama'at were famous Deobandi scholars, namely, Muhammad Ilyas, Muhammad Yusuf Al-Kandhlawi, and Maulana Inaamul Hasan. Darul Ifta, Deoband, states: "According to Deoband Ulama, Tableeghi Jamat is a true Jamat which is among the Ahl-e-Sunnah wal-Jamat (the mainstream Muslims) and following the *maslak* [teachings] of Deoband" (see: http://darulifta-deoband.org/viewfatwa.jsp?ID=1570). In answer to the question: Why don't we (Deobandis) follow Barelwi Shareef? Darul Ifta asserts: "The Deobandis set their beliefs and actions according to the Quran and Hadith. They follow the Sahaba (companions), Tab'een (successors of Sahaba), Imams and pious elders. They shun innovations, un-Islamic customs and traditions, and follow the footsteps of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) in each matter. While, the Baralewis are involved in scores of innovations (Bid'aat), superstitions and customs, they are far away from the teachings of the Quran and Hadith. The innovations spread due to ignorance; this is the reason that during the past 50-60 years more than 6 lakh Braalewis have joined the mainstream Muslims (Deobandis) due to blessings of Islamic madarsas and Tableeghi Jamat" (see: http://darulifta-deoband.org/viewfatwa.jsp?ID=2537).

[319] In answer to the question: "Is Salafi Aqida the same as Sunni Aqida?" Faraz Rabbani writes: "**Absolutely not. The main difference between Wahhabis and those on the Sunni path is in matters of belief. This is the primary difference.** Matters of fiqh are secondary. There is also a fundamental difference in methodological understandings, especially of the concept of innovation (bid`a) and traditional religious authority. The Wahhabis deny traditional Islamic spirituality as well," see Faraz Rabbani, "Is Salafi Aqida the Same as Sunni Aqida?" (September 13, 2005), accessed on 19 February 2010; available from http://qa.sunnipath.com/issue_view.asp?HD=7&ID=124&CATE=24.

A Sunni man may marry a woman who belongs to another religion like Judaism or Christianity. But a Sunni man cannot marry a Deobandi woman because she belongs to a deviant, apostate sect within Islam! In effect, the Barelwi Alim was only following the Consensus of the Community, which he is bound to do in accordance with the Sacred Law. Scholars and muftis are not permitted to follow their own desires and lusts when issuing a verdict. It is stated in *Durr al-Mukhtar* that muftis are bound to follow whatever the previous Ulama preferred and whatever they considered to be correct, just as if they would have given us the verdict in their lifetime[320].

Many people that identify themselves as "Deobandis" are unaware of the infamous statements of kufr uttered by these *four* men. In reality, such victims are not Deobandis (*kafirs*), nor are they considered disbelievers, nor is performing their funeral prayer, disbelief. A *real* Deobandi is fully aware of such kufr, and the clear meaning of these insults; and despite this considers the insults to be the truth and the insulter to be a believer and his leader. Such a person is ruled a *kafir*. Thus, to ensure that we remain steadfast on the *Ahle Sunnat wal Jama'at*, we disassociate ourselves from the company, mosques, Darul Ulooms, and madressas of all Deobandis. For by remaining in the company of Deobandis (laymen and scholars alike), one runs the risk of meeting a *real* Deobandi[321].

In the East, such people are easy to identify as they wear their loyalty upon their sleeves. But in the West, such people employ a more subtle and sophisticated approach by professing to be strict Hanafis, mainstream Sufis,

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Bold is the compiler's emphasis. **The same can be said for Deobandis, who subscribe to unbelief and rightly belong to the "Salafi" path.**

[320] Huzoor Taajush Shari'ah, Hazrat Allama Mufti Mohammed Akhtar Raza Khan al-Qaderi al-Azhari, *Azharul Fatawa: A Few English Fatawa* (Durban: Azhari Islamic Mission, 2008), 64.

[321] Mawlana Yaseen Akhtar Misbahi, *AHLU'S SUNNAH WA'L JAMA'AH AN INTRODUCTION*, tr. Muhammad Aqdas, accessed on 13 September 2009; available from http://www.freewebs.com/barelwi/IntroToAhlusSunnah.pdf, 17-19.

and the modern-day spokesmen for traditional Islam without the slightest reference to these *four* men. They *do not* divulge their unbelief to the public. They wait and watch for the layman to bind himself to them, and when they are sure of their victim's loyalty, then and only then can the true face of the *real* Deobandis be seen. Unconsciously the layman starts becoming nearer to them and loses his faith, being defrauded by their secret beliefs and ideologies. If this sinister process goes unabated then the layman will eventually leave the Sunni masses and become a Deobandi devotee, who is fully cognizant of the issue, and despite this considers the insults to be the truth and the insulter to be a believer. It is very difficult for someone who has over a long period of time, invested all his soul and its loyalty upon a certain belief, to then abandon it. A human being is ultimately a creature of habit, and old habits are often very difficult to break. As a result, he will go on spreading their blasphemous beliefs and become an apostate like the founders of the Deobandi school.

Although the forerunners of the Deobandi school are dead and gone, their sect is alive and well today. Nuh Keller is forgetting that in Islam no one else can atone for our sins, for the same reason that no one else can sin for us; namely the divine decree: ﴿**No bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another**﴾ **(Qur'an 6:164)**, which means he cannot apologize on behalf of these *four* incorrigible men! The problem with the Deobandi sect is that their scholars *sincerely* believe in their kufr as "an important and insufficiently understood religious truth[322]" and are unwilling, therefore, to

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[322] Nuh Keller writes: "Khalil Ahmad's and Ashraf'Ali Thanwi's comparisons of the Prophet's knowledge (Allah bless him and give him peace) *were* offensive in their wording, and certainly not of the 'ordinary scholarly discourse' acceptable among Muslims. But because they were *intended* as scholarly discourse, to emphasize the **human limitations** of the Prophet's knowledge (Allah bless him and give him peace) which these men regarded as an important and insufficiently understood religious truth—not as an insult against the Prophet—their words did not entail the judgement of *kufr* that Ahmad Reza Khan issued against them" (see *Conclusions* in Iman, Kufr, and Takfir). Underline and bold is the compiler's emphasis. The Deobandi Shaykhs willfully denied the **human perfections and Prophetic characteristics** that distinguish our master

repent or accept the verdict of the *Ahle Sunnat wal Jama'at* against them. They are nearer and dearer to Wahhabis than Sunnis for this reason. Keller is right about one thing: a Muslim is obliged to inform his brethren of the truth when they are wrong on a religious matter. He is wrong on this matter. The Deoband Shaykhs were ruled *kafirs* by three-hundred and one eminent scholars and muftis of the Arab world and the Subcontinent. Two-hundred and sixty-eight of those scholars were Indians who could read their infamous statements of unbelief in Urdu (the common vernacular of the people). Muslims need to be informed of this to protect them from falsehood and disbelief!

Closing Remarks

Before concluding Keller writes:

> "As for Ahmad Reza's contention on the last page of *Husam al-Haramayn*[323] that whoever does not declare the *kufr* of an unbeliever—here meaning the Deobandis—himself becomes an unbeliever, this is the Islamic legal ruling *only in certain cases* of uncontestably certain *kufr,* such as followers of other faiths, who explicitly deny the messengerhood of the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace), not in all cases. Imam Ghazali gives the details in his *al-Iqtisad fi al-i'tiqad,* in a passage we shall translate in the future in an essay on 'the fallacy that not declaring another's unbelief is unbelief[324].'"

Muhammad ﷺ from the remainder of mankind. They *intended* to emphasize so-called **"human limitations"** that just anyone, indeed even all animals and beasts possess. These men *do not* consider their malicious comparisons to be insulting. On the contrary, they regard their words to be "an important and insufficiently understood religious truth." Today Nuh Keller and his two faithful lieutenants (Hamza Karamali and Faraz Rabbani) are attempting to spread this heretical belief. May Allah ﷻ protect us!

[323] Keller is actually referring to the last page of *Al-Mo'tamad Al-Mustanad* (the fatwa of kufr) within *Husam al-Haramayn*. The 33 verdicts written by the venerable scholars and muftis of the two sanctuaries follow Imam Ahmed Raza's ؓ fatwa.

[324] Nuh Keller, "Iman, Kufr, and Tafir."

Keller claims that only "followers of other faiths" can be declared unbelievers. What an odd assertion since Hadrat Ibn Abideen ﷺ said the RafiDis are Kaafirs, and "he who withholds (tawaqqafa) pronouncing the ruling that they are Kaafirs is himself a Kaafir[325]." Faraz Rabbani and Shaykh Muhammad ibn Adam declared all Ismailis non-Muslims (unbelievers). Likewise, the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan declared all Qadianis/Ahmadis (followers of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, India) to be non-Muslims, while Ordinance XX (passed in 1984) banned them from proselytizing and identifying themselves as Muslims[326]. In effect, "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir" overturns *all* of these fatawa.

It is interesting to note that Mirza Ghulam was condemned in *Husam al-Haramayn* (1905) for professing to be the promised Messiah and Mahdi. Yet his community has not suffered persecution or reprisals from Hanafi Barelwis. We, the followers of Imam Ahmed Raza ﷺ, do not compel people in matters of religion, nor do we endorse vigilantism, mob "justice," or terrorism. We leave extremeism to Wahhabis and their sectarian offshoots[327]. For this reason, A'la Hadrat ﷺ quotes the following verses from the Holy Qur'an at the end of *Tamheedul Iman*,

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[325] Shaykh Gibril F Haddad, "Takfir – Anathematizing" (September 14, 2005), accessed on 4 January 2009; available from http://qa.sunnipath.com/issue_view.asp?HD=1&ID=216&CATE=13.

[326] See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahmadiyya_Muslim_Community#Persecution. The Ahmadiyya community **does not** "explicitly deny the messengerhood of the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace)." They reject like Muhammad Qasim Nanotwi the generally understood meaning of Khatam ul-Nabuwwat. Thus, they believe that the birth or appearance of another prophet **does not** affect the Finality of Prophethood. Both the proposition and the claim to prophethood are deviation and heresy.

[327] The scholars of Deoband issue fatawa denouncing terrorism, yet their school of thought is encouraging the "talibanization" of Muslim countries like Afghanistan and Pakistan. Reporters obverse that, "Students learn a volatile mix of Islam and politics at Khair-ul-Madaris, a Deobandi madrassa, or religious school, in Multan. Filling in for dysfunctional public schools, madrassas have thrived since General Zia-ul-Haq's government began funding them in the 1980s. Many, including this one, promote a pro-Taliban agenda aimed at turning Pakistan into an Islamic state" (Don Belt, "Struggle for the Soul of Pakistan," *National Geographic* (September 2007), 37). If this isn't

﴾**Say: Truth has come and falsehood has vanished away. Lo! Falsehood is ever bound to vanish.**﴿ (17:81)

﴾**There is no compulsion in religion. The right direction is hence forth distinct from error.**﴿ (2:256)

So who is right Nuh Keller or A'la Hadrat رضي الله عنه? According to Keller this is one man's "contention," but as we have seen several Islamic scholars have applied this rule (takfir) to those sects that deny the necessities of the faith in part or full! A'la Hadrat رضي الله عنه was not giving an isolated opinion, nor did he dissent from the majority of scholars because this is the "contention" of the *Ahle Sunnat wal Jama'at*. Here is what Imam Ahmed Raza رضي الله عنه wrote on the last page of *Husam al-Haramayn*:

> "So comprehensively all these factions are disbelievers, apostates and out of the pale of Islam by the consensus of the believers. In *Bazaziah*, *Al-Durur Al-Ghurur*, *Fatawa Khairiah*, *Majma Al-Anhaar*, *Durr Al-Mukhtar* [by Imam Haskafi رضي الله عنه] and in reliable books has clearly been stated about these disbelievers that whosoever has doubt in their blasphemy and chastisement, becomes [a] disbeliever himself[328]."

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disconcerting enough, "Policy communities, for their part, have depicted the Tablighi Jamaat as a 'gateway to terrorism' and contend that the organization poses numerous, underestimated security risks. The group appeared peripherally in such high-profile cases as those of Jose Padilla [who was charged with being part of a 'North American support cell' that worked to foster violent jihad campaigns in Afghanistan and elsewhere overseas from 1993 to 2001], Richard Reid [the shoe bomber] and John Walker Lindh ["the American Taliban"], all of whom allegedly used the group as their stepping stone to radicalism," see Salah Uddin Shoaib Choudhury, "Tablighi Jamaat - Preaching Jihad," *American Chronicle* (October 13, 2009), accessed on 19 February 2010; available from http://www.americanchronicle.com/articles/printFriendly/123722.

[328] Imam Ahmad Raza رضي الله عنه, *Hussam al-Haramayn*, tr. Alhaaj Bashir Hussain Nazim, available from http://www.razanw.org/modules/products/item.php?itemid=1, 58-59/149 (pdf version).

As always Imam Ahmed Raza followed the authentic books of Fiqh. Why Keller chose to omit this fact is best known to him. We should also clarify what Imam Ghazali said about these factions. In the 15th eulogy of *Husam al-Haramayn,* Hadrat Mawlana Ahmad Ali Makki al-Imdadi quotes the famous Persian scholar thus:

> "Imam Ghazali has rightly said about these factions that if the king of Islam assassinates one of these factions, it will be better than the killing of thousands of unbelievers, because such vicious factions are more injurious. **The people cautiously save themselves from the attacks of unbelievers, but the attack of a clandestine unbeliever is more dangerous.** The [clandestine] unbelievers attack being in ambush.
>
> These people spread blasphemous belief in the disguise of the scholars, spiritual guides, mendicants and righteous people. These people have vicious doctrines in their hearts and put them forth whenever and wherever find opportunity. The masses rely on their exoteric appearances being ignorant of their esoteric wickedness and shamelessness. Such people in these circumstances make fatal attack; and lead the people astray due to their unconsciousness. Since the masses are not appraised of their inner-conscience, machination and affairs, therefore, are deceived by the outward appearance.
>
> They start becoming nigher to them and lose their faith being defrauded by their secret beliefs and ideologies. Consequently, they accept their sugar-coated utterances and start entering into their vicious circles as devotees, as a result of which they go on spreading the blasphemous beliefs.

> In lieu of this disorder, a Gnostic of Allah, Imam Ghazali ﷺ had exhorted: **'If the king of the time assassinates such an astray person, it will be better than the killing of thousands of unbelievers.'**
>
> It is written in *Mawahib-ul-Ladunniyah* that he, who lessens the glory of the Prophet ﷺ he is liable to the assassination[329]."

Case Closed

As we said at the beginning of this book, "The believer is the mirror of the believer." A'la Hadrat ﷺ was a brilliant *faqih*, who had "gathered the features of Iman, accomplished the manners of Islam, and excelled internally against the blameworthy features of his ego (*nafs*)." The rationale behind arguing beside the point in the case of *Imam Ahmed Raza ﷺ v. Darul Uloom Deoband* (1905) is to beguile and mislead the Ummah. It is a material fallacy[330]. Nuh Keller **did not** refute *probable possibility* because "to refute an opponent, one must prove the contradictory of his statement; and this is done only when the same predicate—not merely the name but the reality—is denied of the same subject in the same respect, relation, manner, and time in which it was asserted[331]." A'la Hadrat ﷺ soundly refuted the Deobandis in 1905. More than a century later, *Husam al-Haramayn* and *Tamheedul Iman* are still a perfect rebuttal to "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir!" The fatwa of apostasy against these *four* men is valid, sound, and proper.

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[329] Imam Ahmed Raza ﷺ, *Hussam al-Haramayn,* tr. Alhaaj Bashir Hussain Nazim, available from http://www.razanw.org/modules/products/item.php?itemid=1, 101-102/149 (pdf version).

[330] "*Material fallacies* have their root in the matter- in the terms, in the ideas, and in the symbols by which the ideas are communicated. They vitiate an argument that may be formally correct," see Sister Miriam Joseph, *The Trivium*, 188.

[331] Ibid., 202.

CONCLUSION

Qubtul-Aqtab, Sayyeduna Ghous-ul-Azam Sayyid Shaykh Abu-Muhammad Abdul-Qadir Hasani Hussani Jilani Baghdadi ﷺ said:

> "As for truthfulness [*sidq*], the basic guidance on the subject is contained in the words of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He):
>
> '**O you who believe, be careful of your duty to Allah, and be with the truthful.** (9:119)
>
> –and in the traditional report, transmitted on the authority of 'Abdu'llah ibn Mas'ud (may Allah be well pleased with him), who stated that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) once said:
>
> 'When the servant [of the Lord] never ceases to tell the truth, and makes truthfulness [*sidq*] his constant pursuit, he is eventually recorded in the sight of Allah as a champion of truth [*siddiq*]. But when he never ceases to tell lies, and makes falsehood [*kidhb*] his constant pursuit, he is eventually recorded in the sight of Allah as a professional liar [*kadhdhab*].[332]'"

A'la Hadrat ﷺ is a *siddiq* (champion of truth) and proof of Islam. The Deobandis and their apologists weave webs of deceit to remove the love and honor of the beloved servants of Allah ﷻ from the hearts and lips of the Muslim public. They deliberately lower the Divinely Blessed status of

[332] Shaikh 'Abd Al-Qadir Al-Jilani ﷺ, *Sufficient Provision for the Seekers of the Path of Truth* (Hollywood, Al-Buz Publishing, INC., 1997), tr. Muhtar Holland, 5:157.

Sayyiduna Rasulullah ﷺ. It is obvious that their eyes are open, but the heart is sealed. Allah ﷻ says:

> ﴾**And of mankind are some who say, 'We have believed in Allah and the Last Day,' yet they are not believers. They seek to deceive Allah and the believers, and in fact they deceive none but themselves, and yet they perceive not. In their hearts is a disease, so Allah has increased their disease and for them is a painful torment, because they falsify. And when it is said to them, create not mischief on the earth, they say: 'Nay, we are but reformists.' Beware! Surely, it is they who are the mischief-makers, but they perceive not. And when it is said to them 'Believe as others have believed,' they say: 'Shall we believe as fools believe?' Beware it is they who are the fools, but they know not.**﴿ (*Tafseer Noor-ul-Irfaan*, 2:8-13).

Imam Ahmed Raza ؓ was sent at the turn of the 20th century to protect the pristine teachings of the *Ahle-Sunnat wal Jama'at*. He brought light into the hearts of Muslims by cultivating love for Allah ﷻ, the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and the *awliya*. The august Mujaddid ؓ was an incredible genius with deep insight in every science of knowledge, especially of the Holy Quran, Hadith Shareef, Fiqah and Tasawwuf[333]. Accordingly, the fatawa of Imam Ahle Sunnat ؓ are a treasure of immense benefit to seekers of knowledge and *Haqq*!

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333 The Sultan al-Awliya, Ghous-ul-Azam ؓ, succinctly said: "Sufism [*tasawwuf*] means being truthful with the Truth [*Haqq*], and on your best behavior with His creatures [*khalq*]," see Shaikh 'Abd Al-Qadir Al-Jilani ؓ, *Sufficient Provision for the Seekers of the Path of Truth* (Hollywood, Al-Buz Publishing, INC., 1997), tr. Muhtar Holland, 5:13.

Dua

"Ya Allah ﷻ give wisdom and courage to my Muslim brothers to accept the truth and save them from supporting Zayd and 'Amar[334] against You ﷻ and Your Beloved Prophet ﷺ on the basis of obstinacy and selfishness. Accept our prayer for the sake of our Master, the August Prophet, Sayyiduna Muhammad's ﷺ dignity and magnanimity. Amin!"



[334] This is A'la Hadrat's ﷺ dua in *Tamheedul-Iman*. Zayd and 'Amar is an allusion to the Deobandi Shaykhs, in general, and Ashraf 'Ali Thanwi, in particular.

SUMMATION

That we are obliged to love and honor the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is necessarily known to be of the religion. "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir" is not legally valid in the Hanafi school because it ignores this crucial legal distinction. In the words of Hadrat Ibn Aabideen ؓ in his Radd al-Muhtar,

> "I say, and I have seen it in Kitaabul Kharaaj by Imam Yousuf that if a Muslim slanders the Messenger Sallallahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam or belies him (kadhdhaba) or finds fault ('aaba) or degrades (tanaqqasahu) be it known that he has disbelieved in Allah Ta'aalah and his wife goes out of his Nikah.. (Baanat minhu imra-atahu)" (Radd al-Muhtar vol.3/p.291)[335].

This is also the opinion of Imam Haskafi ؓ in his *al-Durr al-Mukhtar* and the Shafii Imam Subki ؓ in his *al-Sayf al-maslul*[336]. What's more, "Anyone who says that a certain person is more learned than the Beloved of Allah ﷺ has surely degraded Sayyiduna Rasulullah ﷺ and the ruling in his case will be that of one who abuses the Habib" (*Naseem-ur-Riaz*) [337].

Nuh Keller might disagree, but he is disregarding the fact that such slander was first promulgated in the Subcontinent in the 1820s by the chief Najdi of India, Ismail Dihlawi. Later the Deobandi Shaykhs imitated Dihlawi in *Tahzir-un-Naas*, *Fatawa Rashidiyya*, *Baraheen-e-Qatiha*, and *Hifzul Iman*.

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[335] Shaykh Gibril F Haddad, "Takfir - Anathematizing" (September 14, 2005), accessed on 8 October 2009; available from http://qa.sunnipath.com/issue_view.asp?HD=1&ID=216&CATE=13.

[336] Shaykh Faizan ul-Mustafa, "A Just Response to the Biased Author," available from http://www.gatewaytomadina.org/articles/A_Just_Reply_To_A_Biased_Author.pdf, 60-67.

[337] A'la Hadrat ؓ quotes this verdict in *Husam al-Haramayn* and *Tamheedul Iman*. This quote is taken from "Tamheedul Iman" in *Thesis*, 4:115.

Prior to the work of Dihlawi and the Deobandis, no one had ever committed such enormities in the Islamic world. Keller should be familiar with this line of argument. It appears in his "Letter to 'Abd al-Martin," when he addresses the kufr of his own contemporaries and writes: "As for '*others disagree,'* it is true, but… Who else said it before? And if no one did, and everyone else considers it kufr, on what basis should it be accepted[338]?" Keller alludes to this fact in "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir" when he writes:

> "In any previous Islamic community, whether in Hyderabad, Kabul, Baghdad, Cairo, Fez, or Damascus—in short, practically anywhere besides the British India of his[339] day—Muslims would have found his words repugnant and unacceptable."

And similarly he ruminates:

> "When did any Islamic scholar ever compare the knowledge of the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) to the depraved, to the mad, or to animals—even to make a point?"

Yet Shaykh Nuh Ha Min Keller is taking exception to the great majority of the *Ahle Sunnat wal Jama'at*, and the 301 Ulama from the Arab world and the Subcontinent that ratified *Husam al-Haramayn*. And by doing so he goes against his own words.

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[338] Nuh Ha Min Keller, "Letter to 'Abd al-Matin" (1996), accessed on 11 April 2010; available from http://www.masud.co.uk/ISLAM/nuh/amat.htm.
[339] Khalil Ahmad

APPENDIX 1: THE KHARIJITES

The following question and answer were excerpted from *Al-Malfuz Al-Sharif*:

> **Question:** Did the Wahhabis exist in the time of the *Khulafah al-Rashidin*?
>
> **ANSWER:** It was this very sect that Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās ﵄ requested permission from *Amīr al-Mu‘minīn* Sayyidunā ‘Ali al-Murtudah ﵁ to confront. They were 10,000 in number. *Amīr al-Mu‘minīn* ﵁ granted him permission and he went to them and asked, "*What was it about Amīr al-Mu‘minīn that you so strongly disagree with?*" They replied, "*Why did the Amīr appoint Sayyidunā Abu Musa Ash‘ari ﵁ as a judge (Hakam) in the event of Siffīn*[340]*? This is Shirk, because Allāh ﷻ states in the Qur'ān:*

[340] Shaykh Hamza Yusuf relates the events that led up to the Battle of Siffin in his *The Creed of Imam al-Tahawi*. He writes: "With the murder of 'Uthman ﵁, the third caliph, the Muslims split into different camps. The two primary factions were that of Mu'awiyah ﵁, the governor of Syria and Palestine, and that of 'Ali ﵁, who was residing in Medina but soon relocated to Iraq. Mu'awiyah ﵁ wanted to bring justice to the murders of 'Uthman ﵁, while 'Ali felt that exacting retribution at that point would lead to greater disunity within the Muslim community. Over this issue the two factions went to war" (*The Creed of Imam al-Tahawi*, 17). A battle took place at Siffin on the Syrian border in July 567 C.E. During their retreat, the army of Sayyiduna Mu'awiyah ﵁ called for arbitration. The two groups were unable to reach a satisfactory agreement. Sayyiduna 'Ali ﵁ again prepared to meet Sayyiduna Mu'awiyah ﵁ in battle. But the Kharijites seceded from his Caliphate causing chaos and momentary upheaval amongst the Muslims (M.Y. Abdul Karrim, *Islamic History Part II*, 161-162). The Best of Companions ﵁ had credible reasons for the disagreements that arose between them. They fought chivalrously with each other strictly observing the rules of engagement. After the murder of Sayyiduna Ali ﵁ by a Kharijite fanatic his son Imam Hasan ﵁ renounced his own right to the Caliphate and transferred it to Sayyiduna Mu'awiyah ﵁.

﴾Judgement is from none, but Allāh ﷾[341]﴿."

Sayyidunā ʻAbdullāh ibn ʻAbbās ﵁ replied, *"Is it not in the very same Qur'ān that Allāh ﷾ states:*

﴾And if you fear a dispute between husband and wife, then appoint an arbiter (Hakam) from the side of the family of the man and an arbiter from the side of the family of the woman (to solve the problem). If these two will desire reconciliation then Almighty Allāh ﷾ will cause unity between them. Undoubtedly, Allāh ﷾ is All-Knowing, Aware[342].﴿"

Remember that this is the same format of argument used by the present day Wahhabis. They turn a blind eye to the differences between bestowed and personally acquired knowledge and also reject the legality of seeking assistance from anyone other than *Allāh* ﷾. It is an *Islāmic* belief that *Allāh* I has bestowed His elite servants with this science of knowledge and powers. This knowledge and power is purely *'Ata'ī* (bestowed) and not *Zātī* (personal). But, the Wahhabi rejects this in totality and says that such beliefs are *Shirk*.

However, after quoting the above *Ayah,* Sayyidunā ʻAbd-Allāh Ibn ʻAbbās ﵁ then asked them, *"What type of belief do you hold that you claim Imān with all the Ayahs of negation (nafī), and Kufr with the Ayahs of affirmation (Ith'bāt)?"* On hearing this realistic statement of Sayyidunā Ibn ʻAbbās ﵁, half of this group (5,000) repented and joined *Amīr al- Muʻminīn* ﵁. The remainder of the group (5,000) were devious and held fast to

[341] *Holy Qur'an*, 12:40.
[342] *Holy Qur'an*, 4:40.

their false beliefs. After this dialogue, *Amīr al- Mu'minīn* رضي الله عنه issued the order to the *Muslim* army to kill the remainder.
Sayyidunā Imām al-Hasan رضي الله عنه (d.49/669), Sayyidunā Imām al-Husain رضي الله عنه (d.61/680) and many other eminent spiritual personalities hesitated because this group spent the entire night in *'Ibādah* and recited the Holy *Qur'ān* during the day. They protested, "*How could we raise our swords on such people who are soaked in 'Ibādah?*" Meanwhile in the past, Sayyidunā Rasūlullāh ﷺ had already informed Sayyidunā 'Ali رضي الله عنه about this sect. The *Nabī* ﷺ said, *"These people will revolt against Islām and they will be very staunch in their external duties of Salāh and fasting, etc. They will leave the Dīn as an arrow leaves the bow for its target never to return again. They will recite the Holy Qur'ān but it will not proceed below their throats."* Eventually the *Muslim* army was compelled to execute the command of *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* رضي الله عنه. Hence, the battle commenced. In the course of the *Jihād*, the *Amīr* was informed that the enemy had retreated to the banks of a river. On hearing this Sayyidunā 'Ali al-Murtudah رضي الله عنه said, *"By Allāh! Not even 10 of them will cross the river and all will be killed on this side."* So it did happen. Every single one of the 5,000 were killed before crossing the river.

Since the army of the *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* رضي الله عنه was impressed by the piety of the enemy, he had to clear their minds and hearts of their misconception. To do this, he ordered his army to search the corpses of the enemy and find one named *Zūl-Thadiyya*. Sayyidunā 'Ali رضي الله عنه also gave some physical description of this person to make it easy to find him. The *Amīr* said, "*If you find him dead, then you have verily killed the most evil man on earth. But if you do not find him amongst the dead, then you have killed the best of men on earth.*" The search began and

every corpse was inspected. This cursed person was found below a pile of bodies. His one hand was shaped like the breast of a woman. When *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* رضي الله عنه saw him he glorified *Allāh* ﷾ and shouted the *Takbīr (Allāhu-Akbar)*. The entire *Muslim* army was convinced and satisfied by the *Karamah ('Ilm al-Ghayb)* of *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* رضي الله عنه. They too praised *Allāh* ﷾ and thanked Him ﷻ for cleansing the earth of this filth. Then, the illustrious *Amīr* رضي الله عنه addressed the army and said, *"Do you think that this cursed sect and their following are totally cleansed? Certainly not! Some of them are still in the womb of their mothers and others are in the sperm of their fathers. When one of these groups is exterminated, another will rise with Fitnah and this will continue till the last group emerges with the cursed Dajjāl!"*

This is the very sect that will emerge in every era with different names and disguises. Now, in this last period of time, the very sect has emerged as *"Reformers of Dīn"* and called themselves Wahhabis. Their signs and descriptions are foretold in the *Sahih Hadith Sharīf*, which clearly befit the present day Wahhabis.

Some of the Prophecies are as follows:

- ***If you compare your Salāh with their Salāh, you will regard yours as insignificant and insufficient. Likewise will be the situation of your fasting and good deeds.***

- ***They will recite the Holy Qur'ān but it will not go below their throats (not enter their hearts).***

- ❖ ***Their words and speech will be very sweet and appealing and they will quote the Hadith Sharīf in every thing they say*.**

- ❖ ***They will leave the (boundaries of) Dīn as an arrow leaves the bow for its target (never to return again).***

- ❖ ***One of their signs is that most of them will have shaven heads.***

- ❖ ***Their pants will be raised high above the ankles[343].***

[**Compiler (Mufti-e-A'zam ﵀):** It is known that the father of the present day Wahhabis is Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb Najdi (d.1206/1792). It is said that he exercised the shaving of the head so strongly that if any women accepted Wahhabism, he ordered the hair on their heads to be shaven off. This was done

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343 Cited in ***Sahih al-Bukhari*** and ***Sahih Muslim***. Also cited in ***Musnad Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal*** ﵁, *Hadith* no. 11047, narrated by Sayyiduna Abu Sa'id al-Khudri ﵁. A similar *Hadith* is also cited in ***Tahzib al-Kamal,*** Vol.7, p.409, *Hadith* no.3061, narrated by Sayyiduna Abi-Bar'za ﵁ which reads:

(3061) ـ شَرِيْكُ بنُ شِهَاب الحَارِثِي البَصْرِي.روى عن أبـي بَرْزَة الأسْلَمِيُّ (س.(روى عنه : الأزرق بن قيس (س(
روى له النَّسائي حديثاً واحداً. وقد وقع لنا عالياً جداً من روايته.
أخبرَنا به أبو الحسن بن البُخاري، قال: أنبأنا القاضي أبو المكارم اللَّبَّان، وأبو جعفر الصَّيْدَلانيُّ، قالا: أخبرَنا أبو عليٌّ الحَدَّاد، قال: أخبرَنا أبو نُعيم الحافظ، قال: حَدَّثَنا عبد الله بن جعفر، قال: حَدَّثَنا يونُس بن حَبـيْب، قال: حَدَّثَنا أبو داود الطَّيالِسيُّ، قال: حَدَّثَنا عبد الله بن جعفر عن حَمَّاد بن سَلَمة، عن الأزرق (بن قيس)، عن شَرِيك بن شِهاب، قال: كُنتُ أتَمَنَّى أنْ ألْقى رَجُلاً مِن أصحابِ النَّبـيِّ أسْأَلُهُ عَنِ الخَوارج، فلَقِيتُ أبا بَرْزَةَ الأسْلَمِيَّ في يَوْمِ عِيدٍ في ناسٍ مِن أصحابِهِ فقُلتُ لهُ: هل سَمِعتَ رسول الله يُحدِّثُ في الخَوارِج. قالَ أبو بَرْزَةَ: سَمِعْتُ رسول الله بِأُذُني ورَأَيتُهُ بِعَيْنِي أُتِيَ رسول الله بِمالٍ فقَسَمَهُ، فَجاءَ رجُلٌ أسْوَدُ مَطْمُومَ الشَّعْر، علَيهِ ثَوْبانِ أبْيضانِ فأعْطَىٰ مَن عَن يَمِينِه ومَنْ عَن شِمالِهِ، ولَم يُعطِهِ شَيئاً فجاءَ مِن ورائِهِ، فقالَ: واللهِ يا مُحَمَّدُ ما عَدَلْتَ. فقالَ رسولَ الله : âوالله لاَ تَجِدونَ أحَداً بَعْدي أعْدَلَ علَيكُم مِنِّي» قالَها ثَلاثاً. ثمَّ قالَ رسول الله : «يَخْرُجُ قَومٌ في آخِرِ الزَّمانِ كأنَّ هَذا مِنْهُم يَقرؤون القُرآنَ لاَ يُجاوِزُ تَراقِيهِمْ يَمْرُقونَ مِنَ الإسْلامِ كَما يَمْرُقُ السَّهْمُ مِنَ الرَّمِيَّةِ سِيماهُمُ التَّحْلِيقُ يَخرُجونَ حتَّى يَخْرُجَ آخِرُهُم مَعَ المسيحِ، فإذا لَقِيتُمُوهُم فاقْتُلوهُم هُمْ شَرُّ الخَلْقِ والخَلِيقَةِ.á رواه عن محمد

N.B. There are some parts of this *Hadith* that are narrated separately. How precise is the bestowed Knowledge of *Ghayb* of Sayyiduna Rasulullah ﷺ that every single prediction immaculately fits in place!

because he said, *"This is the hair of the period of Kufr and therefore it must be shaven off."* The shaving of hair of the females carried on for some time until one frustrated lady confronted him and said, *"Why do you not order the beards of your new recruits to be also shaven off when they enter your Dīn? That is also the hair of the Kufr period."* It was after this objection that he stopped this shameful and irreligious practice. Look at the present day Wahhabis. The majority of them shave off their hair and lift their pants high above their ankles. How true are the Prophecies of Sayyidunā Rasūlullāh ﷺ? They perfectly fit the norms of the present day Wahhabis.]

Once while the Holy Prophet ﷺ was distributing booty after the Battle of *Hunain*, a person objected to the manner of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ distribution. This disrespectful person remarked, *"I don't find justice in your distribution because some persons are getting more while others less."* On hearing this absurd remark, Sayyidunā 'Umar al-Farūq رضي الله عنه was outraged. He drew his sword and said, "*Ya Rasūlallah ﷺ! Grant me permission to behead this Munāfiq (hypocrite)."* The loving *Habīb* ﷺ replied, *"Leave him because such and such type of people will be from his offspring."* Then the Holy Prophet of *Allāh* ﷺ further said, "*Unfortunately, if I don't exercise justice with you, then who will be just to you? May Allāh* ﷻ *have mercy on my brother Musa* عليه السلام *who was oppressed more than me!"*

The illustrious *'Ulamā* state that the distribution of the Holy Prophet ﷺ on this single day was more than a lifelong charity of generous kings. The jungle was full of booty and the *Sahāba* came in huge numbers to collect their share. The *Nabī* of *Allāh* ﷺ distributed the booty to them moving backwards as it got lesser until all of it was given out. While this virtuous

distribution was carrying on, a *Bedouin* came up to the Noble Prophet ﷺ and excitedly pulled away his mantle *(Rida)* from his blessed shoulders. The force of that snatching left marks on the shoulders and back of the Beloved *Nabī* ﷺ. This did not annoy him, instead he compassionately said, "*Oh people! Do not hasten, by Allāh* ﷻ*! You would never find me a miser at any given time*[344]*.*" Certainly, by the Lord of Power who has sent his beloved *Rasūl* ﷺ with truth and ultimate guidance, the most esteemed *Khalifah* of the Almighty *Allāh* ﷻ is Sayyidunā Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Whatever bounties and Mercy are received in this universe, are indeed his blessings. In fact, his blessings in this universe are not equal to an atom of his Divine *Rahmah.*
'Arif-Billāh, Imām Sharf al-Dīn Bū'sayrī ؒ (d.696/1296) states in his famous *Qasīdah al-Burdah Sharīf,*

فَاِنَّ مِنْ جُوْدِكَ الدُّنيَا وَ ضَرَّتَهَا وَمِنْ عُلُوْمِكَ عِلْمَ اللَّوْحِ وَ القَلَمِ

Verily the Mercy of this Duniya and Akhirah are but a trace of your blessings (Beloved Nabī ﷺ) ***and the Knowledge of the unseen (Ilm-e-Ghayb)***[345] ***is but a glimpse of your knowledge***[346]***.***

One day the eminent *As'hāb* were assembled around the Holy Prophet ﷺ and a person came by and stood at the edge of the *Majlis Sharīf*. He glanced at the *Majlis Sharīf* and proceeded to the *Musjid*. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said to the *Sahāba*, "*Who*

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[344] It is easy to understand why the requisite degree of disrespect (for a blasphemous offense) is not evident when this sahih hadith is seen in its proper historical context! Refer to Chapter Seven: Sahih Hadith for details.

[345] Refer ***Al-Daulat al-Makkiya an Maddat al-Ghaybiyya***, a masterpiece on the *'Ilme-Ghayb Allah* ﷻ bestowed on Sayyiduna Rasulullah ﷺ written by A'la-Hadrat Imam Ahmed Raza ؓ.

[346] ***Qasidah Burdah SharÌf***, ch: 10, on *Dhikr and Manajat*, verse no. 4, written by 'Arife-Billah Imam Muhammad Sharf al-Din Busiri al-Shazali ؓ.

amongst you will go and kill him?" Sayyidunā Abu-Bakr al-Siddique ؓ got up and went towards this person. He found him engaged in *Salāh*. He could not kill someone engaged in *Salāh* and therefore, returned to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and explained the situation. The Beloved *Nabī* of ***Allāh*** ﷺ again said, *"Who is it that will kill him?"* Sayyidunā 'Umar al-Farūq ؓ got up and went towards him. He too found him in the same situation and returned. For the third time, the Holy Prophet ﷺ stated, *"Who is it that will kill him?"* Sayyidunā 'Ali al- Murtudah ؓ got up and said, *"I will kill him."* The Holy Prophet ﷺ said, *"Yes you would, if you find him. He will not be there."* When Sayyidunā 'Ali ؓ went into the *Musjid Sharīf,* he found nobody there. The man had already left as predicted by the Glorious Prophet ﷺ. The exalted *Habib* ﷺ remarked, *"If you had killed him, then verily a very great Fitnah (problem) would have been removed from this Ummah."*

This man was the father of Wahhabism whose contemporaries are found today. They are soiling this earth and causing *Fitnah* in this *Ummah*. That rude person stood on the edge of the *Majlis Sharīf* and looked at everyone present there. His egotism led him to believe that there is no one in this *Majlis* better than he is. He was very proud and boastful of his *Salāh* and piety. Least did he realize that *Salāh* or any other virtue is nothing but the mercy of the Glorious Prophet of *Allāh* ﷺ. One can never be a devout servant of *Allāh* عَزَّوَجَلَّ until one sincerely pledges one's allegiance to the Beloved of *Allāh* ﷺ. *Allāh* عَزَّوَجَلَّ places great emphasis in the Holy *Qur'ān* concerning the respect and honour of His Beloved *Nabī* ﷺ before His worship. Therefore, *Allāh* عَزَّوَجَلَّ states:

﴾***So that you may believe in Allāh ﷻ and His Messenger (Rasūl), and respect and honour him, and glorify Allāh in day and night, (reference to Salāh)***[347]***.***﴿

> The first and foremost factor of *Imān* is respect for the *Rasūl*. *Salāh* or any form of *'Ibadah* is useless without reverence for the *Rasūl* ﷺ. There are many *'Abd-Allāhs* (servants of *Allāh* ﷻ) in this world, but the true and sincere *'Abd-Allāh* is he, who is *'Abde-Mustafa* (servant of the Holy Prophet ﷺ). If it is not so, then he is surely an *'Abde Shaytān* (servant of the cursed Devil). May the Merciful *Allāh* ﷻ save us all from this curse[348]!

This concludes the answer given by A'la Hadrat, Mujadidd Imam Ahmed Raza ؓ concerning the followers of Abd al-Wahhab, the Khawarij of our times.

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[347] *Holy Qur'an*, 48:9.

[348] Imam Muhammad Mustafa Rida al-Qadri al-Barkati Nurt ؓ, *Al-Malfuz Al-Sharif* (Durban: Barkaatur-Raza Publications, 2007), tr. Shaykh Abu-Muhammad 'Abd al-Hadi Al-Qadiri Radawi, 1:80-88.

APPENDIX 2: TAKFIR

Some Ulama admit that Rashid Ahmad Gangohi et al. were mistaken. Yet they **do not** endorse the *takfir* against them. They withhold the pronouncement of kufr because their chain of transmission for Sahih Muslim and the Sunan of al-Tirmidhi and Abu Dawud etc. passes through one of these four men[349]. In consequence, they knowingly excuse their kufr as the narration of a *kafir* is not accepted in Hadith transmission[350]. Thus, one can identify two types of scholars: (1) those who admit that the Deobandis were mistaken, yet still consider them to be reliable Masters of Hadith; and (2) those like Keller, who try to verify and validate their kufr. Both groups have a vested interest in the Deobandi Shaykhs. The former is better than the latter; however, the position of both is compromised. Unfortunately, the layman can easily succumb to the influence of the latter through the laxity and permissiveness of the former[351]. Their incredulity leads many a Sunni Muslim to the Hanafi (or "Salafi") school of Deoband. For this reason, we

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[349] The leader of the compilers and author of *Sahih Bukhari*, Imam Muhammad Bin Ismail al-Bukhari ﷺ, **would not** relate a Tradition of the Holy Prophet ﷺ from a man that was capable of cheating a horse (Mawlana 'Abdul 'Aleem Siddiqui al-Qadiri ﷺ, "The History of the Codification of Islamic Law" in *Dimensions of Islam* [2005], 2:70)! What would he say to a man that was capable of insulting Allah ﷻ and His Habib ﷺ?

[350] This is the position of Shaykh Gibril F. Haddad in his "Takfir of Deobandi Scholar" (see: http://www.sunnah.org/articles/takfir_of_deobandi_scholar.htm).

[351] Shaykh Gibril F. Haddad, "No Difference Between Barewlis and Deobandis" [written in Shawwal 1423/December 2002] (September 29, 2005), accessed on 5 April 2010; available from http://qa.sunnipath.com/issue_view.asp?HD=7&ID=498&CATE=2. If *Iman* cannot "meet" *Kufr* then how can Barewlis meet Deobandis? There are real and legitimate differences that exist between these two groups, which Shaykh Gibril F. Haddad brought to light in his book review of *Taqwiyat al-Iman*. It is very difficult in this matter to take a "neutral" position especially when one realizes that the Deobandis consider their *Kufr* to be "an important and insufficiently understood religious truth," to use Keller's phrase. **Nota Bene:** By Deobandis we mean those people, "who are aware of such Kufr and are aware of the clear meanings of these insults, and despite this they consider the insults to be the truth, the insulter to be a believer and their leader" (Al-Haq al-Mubeen, page 24-25. Multan – 'Allama Ahmad Sa'eed Kazmi).

have included an anecdote of A'la Hadrat, Mujaddid Imam Ahmed Raza ﷺ in which he addresses this very issue in a conversation with Janab Sayyid Muhammad Sha Sahib, Deputy Principle of Nadwa. This venerable scholar was unfamiliar with the contents of *Taqwiyat al-Iman* by Ismail Dihlawi, and adverse to *takfir*. It maybe fairly stated that his position is closer to that of the first group of scholars. Here is the answer to such as these given by the august Imam ﷺ in his *Al-Malfuz Al-Sharif:*

> **Compiler**[352]**:** While reading a volume of *Tohfa-e-Hanafiyyah*, I found a very interesting dialogue. I hereby present it for your benefit and reading pleasure. On the morning of Thursday, the 25th of Jamadi al-Awwal 1316 Hijri [circa 1895 C.E.], the following illustrious 'Ulama came to visit the eminent Mujaddid, A'la Hadrat Imam Ahmad Raza ﷺ:
>
> - Sayyid Muhammad Shah Sahib son of Molvi Sayyid Hasan Sha Muhaddith Rampuri, and Deputy Principal of Nadwa,
> - Sayyid Nausha Mia Sahib,
> - Molvi Sayyid Muhammad Ghulam Nabi Sahib Mukhtar, and
> - Tasadduq 'Ali Sahib Wakil.
>
> **Translator**[353]**:** "**Iman**" will refer to A'la Hadrat Imam Ahmed Raza and "**Mia**" (or Master) refers to the Deputy Principal of Nadwa, and whatever appears in brackets are the words of the compiler [Mufti-e-A'zam ﷺ][354].

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[352] The "**Compiler**" is the younger son of A'la Hadrat, Mufti-e-A'zam Shaykh Muhammad Mustafa Rida Khan "Noori" ﷺ (1892-1981).

[353] The **"Translator"** is Khadim al-'Ilm al-Sharif Shaykh Abu-Muhammad 'Abd al-Hadi al-Qadiri Radawi Nuri.

[354] Maryam Qadri has made slight modifications to the presentation of this front matter. The content remains true to the original text and meaning. Any and all modifications to

Mia: (After Salams and introduction) I am the son of Hasan Sha Muhaddith.

Imam: I am aware of his pre-eminence and I once also had the opportunity to meet you.

Mia: I have come to you with the intention to ask a question. I am aware that you are ill and will certainly be uncomfortable with my question, but it is of great importance to me to get your views on the matter concerned.

Imam: I am present at your service. Although I am ill, I will provide you with whatever my limited knowledge can offer.

Mia: My view is not to condemn anyone because it is said: 'Do not soil your mouths by using vulgar language for your enemy. The tongue is the wealth of the heart, whoever you give it to, he will return it to you' ('*Diwaan-e-Sa'ib*).

Compiler: Mia Sahib made this comment because he had already received and read the book, *Sahl al-Suyuf al-Hindiyyah 'Ala Kufriyat Baba al-Najdiyyah*.

Imam: You are absolutely correct. This is so when minor differences exist between the illustrious Jurists, namely, Hanafi and Shafa'i etc. The *Ahle Sunnat* does not allow one to condemn the other because of these minor differences. It is also not ethical to be vulgar and ostracize one another.

Al-Malfuz Al-Sharif were done with the permission of Mahomed Yunus Abdul Karrim Qadri Razvi, the General Secretary of Imam Ahmad Raza Academy in Durban, South Africa.

Mia: This rule is not limited only to minor differences. Look at the Prophet's ﷺ period how the hypocrites intermingled with the *Sahaba*, performed *Salah* with them and sat amongst them in meeting with the Nabi.

Imam: Yes, this was so in the early days of Islam. Later Allah ﷻ clearly declared: ***'Allah ﷻ will not leave the Believers in the state in which you are now, until He separates what is evil from what is good'* (Holy Qur'an, 3:179).** What happened after this Revelation? It was the Day of Jum'ah and the *Musjid al-Sharif* was full to its capacity when Sayyiduna wa Mawlana Rasulullah ﷺ ascended on the *Mimbar al-Sharif* in the presence of the *Sahaba* and called out the hypocrites name by name and ordered, 'Get out so and so, verily you are a hypocrite. Get out so and so, verily you are a hypocrite[355].' He expelled all the hypocrites by name before commencing *Salah*. This is the conduct of the personality who is addressed by Allah ﷻ as *Rahmat al-'Alamin* (Mercy unto the Universe). After the Mercy of Allah ﷻ, his mercy is the greatest in the entire universe.

Mia: What about the command of Allah ﷻ when he sent Nabi Musa عليه السلام to Fir'oun: ***'But speak to him mildly: perchance he may take warning or fear (Allah)'* (Holy Qur'an, 20:44).**

Imam: But Allah ﷻ commands Sayyiduna Rasulullah ﷺ in the Holy Qur'an: ***'Oh Beloved Nabi! Declare Jihad on the infidels and hypocrites and be stern with them. Their abode is***

[355] ***Fath al-Bari*** on the authority of Sayyiduna Ibn 'Abbas رضي الله عنه. This Hadith Sharif is also reported by Tabrani رضي الله عنه and Ibn Abi Khatim رضي الله عنه also on the authority of Sayyiduna 'Abd al-Allah Ibn 'Abbas رضي الله عنه.

***Hell, an evil refuge indeed'* (Holy Qur'an, 9:73).** Allah ﷻ orders this to one whom He ﷻ addresses in the Holy Qur'an as, **'*Verily you have the most exalted standard of character*' (68:4).** This proves that severity with the enemies of *Din* is not an impolite conduct. In fact, it is a Divinely prescribed and praiseworthy conduct.

Mia: I do not refer to the *Kuf'far* (according to Mia, maybe Fir'oun is a Muslim).

Imam: Initially you made a general statement[356]. Nevertheless, you specify a limit.

Mia: If anyone makes a general statement then we should say, 'I regard the statement of my brother as *Kufr*.'

Imam: *Alhamdulillah!* No person who blurts out words of *Kufr* is my brother. There is no reason for sympathetic words for a person when his *Kufr* is established. Why must you say, '*As far as I am concerned these words seem like Kufr*.' This attitude will confuse and mislead the public about the definition of *Kufr*.

Mia: It is necessary to say, '*As far as I am concerned.*'

Imam: It is necessary to be clear when the proofs from *Shari'ah* are established.

Mia: Say, it is the words of *Kufr* but do not say that he is astray. This is a vulgar word.

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[356] At the beginning of their conversation Mia said: "My view is not to condemn anyone…"

Imam: Amazing! To you misguidance is worse than *Kufr*[357].

Mia: In this way a person who shaves off his beard is a *Fasiq* (transgressor) and is astray. But, generally, astray is a vulgar word.

Imam: A clean-shaven person knows that it is *Haram* to shave off the beard, but he still does it. Such a person is a *Fasiq* (transgressor). He will not be regarded as astray because he knows the path of *Sunnah* and believes in it. For some reason or the other, he does not practice it. But on the contrary, the conformation of *Kufr* is surely astray and misleading.

Mia: Even though one acknowledges *Kufr*, but you have labeled a great '*Alim* and *Muhaddith*[358] as one who acknowledges *Kufr*. This man has spent his entire life in the service of *Hadith*.

Imam: Did you read my book *Sal al-Suyuf*?

Mia: Yes.

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[357] Sadly, today some scholars believe that "disunity" is a greater sin than *kufr*!

[358] Mia is referring to Ismail Dihlawi. This is the same argument that the first group of scholars use to defend Rashid Ahmad Gangohi et al. **Nota Bene:** Even Nuh Keller acknowledges the *kufr* of certain Muslims. Take for instance his "Letter to 'Abd al-Matin," which addresses the *kufr* of his contemporaries. These men were Western coverts to Islam and considered by many to be scholars and Sufis. It seems ironic that he **doggedly** defends the *kufr* of the Deobandi Shaykhs, whilst **unreservedly** censuring his own contemporaries.

Imam: Did you find in this entire *Kitab* (book) any place where I had labeled him a *Kafir*[359]?

Mia: No! You did not label him a *Kafir*[360]. [*Alhamdulillah!* This confirmation is a blessing because many Wahhabis are spreading false rumors that the great Imam had labeled him a *Kafir*.]

Imam: So, as much as I have written is surely clear. His service to Hadith is also known. But this service does not exempt him from making a mistake. Almighty Allah ﷻ states: ***'Then do you not see such a one as takes as his god his own vain desire? Allah ﷻ has misled them with their knowledge, and sealed his hearing and his heart (and understanding), and put a cover on his sight: Who, then, will guide him after Allah (has withdrawn guidance)? Will you not then receive admonition?'*** **(Holy Qur'an, 45:23)**

Mia: But you have written that he said, "Do not accept anyone besides Allah ﷻ."

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359 In the same way, Nuh Keller **does not** label his contempories *kafirs* (see "Letter to 'Abd al-Matin").

360 'Allama Fazle Haq Khairabadī ؒ (d. 1861) published the fatwa of unbelief (*kufr*) in ***Tahqeeq al-Fatwa fi Ibtal al-Taghwa*** against Ismail Dihlawi and his book *Taqwiyat al-Iman*. It was signed by **seventeen** leading scholars of *Ahle Sunnat wal Jama'at.* The compiler wishes to thank Shabnam Jilani for verifying the content of this Urdu text. A scan of this fatwa is available at http://www.falaah.co.uk/refutation/wahabi/94-fatwa-upon-ismail-dehalvi-.html. To A'la Hadrat ؒ Ismail Dihlawi was **no better** than Yazid. He **did not** forbid anyone from calling Dihlawi a *kafir*, but he personally **did not** call him a *kafir*. However, he did state in **unequivocal terms** that the chief Najdi was one who acknowledges *kufr*. This is in sharp contrast to what we see today among some Ulama who absolutely refuse to acknowledge that the statements made by the Deobandi Shaykhs were *kufr*!

Imam: Yes, those are his words, not mine. I have quoted his book which was published and I have a copy. He has mentioned this in numerous places.

Mia: Who will make such a statement as not to believe in the Nabi?

Imam: Sir! It is written in the Urdu language. You tell me what the meaning of "accept" is.

Mia: If we did not believe in the Nabi, why would we have studied the Hadith and obtained a degree to get a job?

Imam: You speak for yourself! At that time, there were no degrees or jobs concerned when the book was written.

Mawlana Hasan Rida Khan[361]**:** But Sir! Who gets a job after the age of 50 years?

Mia: Who can dare to insult the Holy Prophet ﷺ?

Imam: Allah forbid! Is it not an insult if one says that the Prophet died and turned to dust?

Mia: Hmmm (in a negative tone), who said this?

Imam: Ismail Dihlawi did.

Mia: No one can possibly say such a thing about the Prophet of Allah.

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[361] Mawlana Hasan Rida ؓ (d. 1336/1908) is the younger brother of Imam Ahmad Raza ؓ.

Imam: I have the published copy of *Taqwiyat al-Iman*. Have a look at it.

Mia: No one can say such a thing of the Rasul.

Imam: Exactly, this was said of the Rasul. Why do you not have a look at the comment?

Sayyid Mukhtar Sayyid: Janab Mia Sahib! These terrible words are found in this book. The heart aches when one reads them, therefore he is upset.

…

Mia: However brother, it is up to you to speak bad and hear bad.

Imam: I will definitely call a *Kafir* a *Kafir*, a *Rafdi* a *Rafdi*, a *Khariji* a *Khariji* and a *Wahhabi* a *Wahhabi*. I do not care if they condemn me. Sayyiduna Abu-Bakr ﷺ and Sayyiduna ‘Umar ﷺ are our masters and leaders, and they have passed away 1300 years ago. Yet they are still insulted to this day.

Mia: They (referring to the other sects/cults) also say the same. What good does this serve?

Imam: It certainly serves a purpose. The Hadith Shareef clearly stipulates: ‘Do you wish to abstain from condemning a fornicator? When will the people recognize them? Expose the

mischief and corruption of the *Fajir* so that people may abstain from them' (*Sayr A'lam al Nubala*, 4:205, etc.[362]).

Mia: This Hadith refers only to the *Fasiq* (transgressor).

Imam: Incorrect belief is much worse than incorrect actions.

Mia: Certainly!

Imam: Sayyiduna Rasulullah ﷺ personally stated that all the groups with incorrect beliefs are residents of Hell. [There is only one solitary exception and that is the Saved Group following the correct beliefs of the *Ahle Sunnat wal Jama'at*[363].] Now, would you not say that a *Rafdi* (Shi'a) is misled and a *Jahannami* (dweller of Hell)?

Mia: A *Rafdi* is not a *Jahannami*.

Imam: Then what is the meaning of this Hadith?

Mia: (Silent with no answer.)

Imam: According to you, all those who regard Sayyiduna Abu-Bakr ؓ and Sayyiduna 'Umar ؓ as non-Believers are not *Jahannamis*?

Mia: No one says this.

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[362] Numerous other Hadith Masters narrate this hadith. For a short list refer to Imam Muhammad Mustafa Rida al-Qadri al-Barkati Nurt ؓ, *Al-Malfuz Al-Sharif* (Durban: Barkaatur-Raza Publications, 2007), tr. Shaykh Abu-Muhammad 'Abd al-Hadi Al-Qadiri Radawi, 1:65.

[363] To clarify this quote Maryam Qadri has added this bracket. Refer to *Sufficient Provisions for Seekers of the Path of Truth*, 1:389-400.

Imam: The *Rafdis* certainly do.

Mia: No *Rafdi* says such a thing.

Mawlana Sayid Tasadduq 'Ali Sahib: There are books published by them, which are available and you say that nobody says such things.

Mia: I know about 10 to 12 thousand acquaintances and family members that are *Rafdis*, but not a single one of them has ever confirmed or said anything like this in my presence.

Mawlana Sayyid Mukhtar Sahib: They certainly believe so, but they practice *taqiyya* (hypocrisy)[364] in your presence and hide their corrupt beliefs and pretend to show reverence to the *Shaykayn* (Sayyiduna Abu-Bakr ؓ and Sayyiduna 'Umar ؓ).

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[364] The scholars of Deoband also practice concealment (*taqiyya*), which allows them to hide their *real* beliefs from Sunni Muslims. This can be seen at the end of "No Difference Berween Barewlis and Deobandis" (2005) in which Faraz Rabbani notes: "*I agree with the content of Shaykh Gibril's comments here.*" This is the same Deobandi scholar, who helped Nuh Keller translate an Urdu fatwa in "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir" (2007). And what exactly is the content of Shaykh Gibril's comments: "**We <u>do not</u> endorse the mistakes that anyone might have made, such as uttering words <u>rightly perceived</u> to lack adab <u>in matters of `Aqida</u>** or contesting the legality of celebrating Mawlid" (see: http://qa.sunnipath.com/issue_view.asp?HD=7&ID=498&CATE=2). Whereas, Nuh Keller alleges that "**none of the six main '*aqida* issues fought over by Barelwis and Deobandis are central enough to be 'necessarily known of the religion,'"** he then categorizes the Prophet's ﷺ knowledge of the unseen, Muhammad Qasim Nanotwi's denial of the Finality of Prophethood, and Rashid Ahmad Gangohi's affirmation that Allah can lie into this subsection of his essay! While wrapping up *The Six Disputed 'Aqida Issues* he again writes, "**<u>The point of mentioning these six questions is that not one of them is a genuine '*aqida* issue</u>**" (Iman, Kufr, and Takfir). Bold and underline is the compiler's emphasis. Nuh Keller also accuses Imam Ahmad Raza ؓ of "misapprehension" and "imputing" the insult! Allah ﷻ says, ﴾**And when they meet believers, they say: 'We believe,' and when they are alone with their devils, they say, 'Surely, we are with you, we are only mocking at them'**﴿ **(*Tafsir Noor-ul-.Irfaan*, 2:114).**

Imam: Well people, now we understand the reason for support and laxity because Mia Sahib has 10 to 12 thousand friends and family members who are *Rafdis*!

Mia: Well brother, you condemn them and they condemn you.

Imam: That does not make any difference to me nor does it bother me because to this day they still condemn and insult Sayyiduna Abu-Bakr ﷺ and Sayyiduna 'Umar ﷺ.

Mia: They also say the same.

Imam: Do you believe that the *Yahud* (Jew) and *Nasarah* (Christian) are astray?

Mia: Maybe!

Imam: This is no answer. Is it "Yes" or "No?"

Mia: Maybe! [Shocking! A doubt to confirm a basic fundamental belief.]

Sayyid Mukhtar Sahib: Does this question also mean, "They also say the same thing to you." [If the astray condemns the righteous as mislead, then the righteous must also abstain from condemning the mislead.]

Mia: The consequences of severity are evident. The *Rafdis* killed the Sunnis in the past and so did the Sunnis. As far as I am concerned they both are *Mar'dud* (Rejected). [**Compiler's comment:** Allah forbid! According to Mia Sahib, one who

speaks *Kufr* is not astray. So, do not call a *Rafdi Jahannami*. But a Sunni is certainly a *Mar'dud*!]

Imam: This may be your belief, but the *Ahle Sunnah* does not subscribe to this.

Mia: If both are Muslims and they fight amongst themselves, then they are certainly *Mar'dud*. [**P.S.** The *Karijites* used this very argument to condemn Sayyiduna 'Ali al-Murtudah ﷺ and the participants of the Battle of Jamal and Siffin[365].]

Imam: What is your verdict concerning Sayyiduna 'Ali ﷺ? He killed 5,000 people that recited the *Kalimah*. They were not only Muslim but also *Qur'ra* (those who recite the Qur'an) and 'Ulama. Can you comment on this.

Sayyid Mukhtar Sahib: Mia Sahib! This discussion will never end. Come, let's terminate this meeting with a good note.

Mia: [While getting up to leave] Someone spoke ill of Sayyiduna Abu-Bakr ﷺ in his presence. People got up to kill him. Sayyiduna Siddique ﷺ stopped them and said, "Do not kill anyone who speaks ill of me." **[Compiler:** The Hadith continues, "But kill those who insult the status of Sayyiduna Rasulullah ﷺ."] Mia Sahib was about to say this portion when the Imam intervened and said, "And those who say that the Nabi is deed and turned to dust." On hearing this, everyone laughed besides Mia Sahib.

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365 [Translator (Shaykh Abu-Muhammad 'Abd al-Hadi al-Qadiri Radawi Nuri): This was a corrupt and misled group that rejected the love and reverence of the *Ahle-Bayt*. They give more preference to the *Sahaba* in comparison to the *Ahle-Bayt*. The great 'Ulama and illustrious Aimma of Islam have ruled that this group is outside the pale of Islam. Refer to *Ahya al-'Ulum al-Din* of Imam al-Ghizali ﷺ for details.]

Imam: *Alhamdulillah!* We are the followers of Amir al-Mu'minin Sayyiduna 'Ali ﷺ, who never regarded the Karijites as brothers. He never allowed a misled or corrupt person near him.

Mia: *As-Salamu 'alay kum* (and left).

The meeting ended on a good note[366].

It is quite unfair to stop Muslims from condemning an unbeliever (*kafir*) when the proofs from *Shari'ah* are established. Scholars may observe silence on this matter, but they **do not** have the right to prohibit Muslims from making *takfir* against Ismail Dihlawi or the Deobandi Shaykhs! Moreover, it is dubious of them to make *takfir* appear "unacceptable" or "unlawful." Our Master Muhammad ﷺ **expelled** the hypocrites from his mosque before commencing *Salah*. Likewise, Amir al-Mu'minin Sayyiduna 'Ali al-Murtudah ﷺ **faught** the Kharijites; he **did not** regard them as brothers in faith[367]! May Allah ﷻ grant us *tawfiq* to remain steadfast on the *Ahle Sunnat wal Jama'at*.

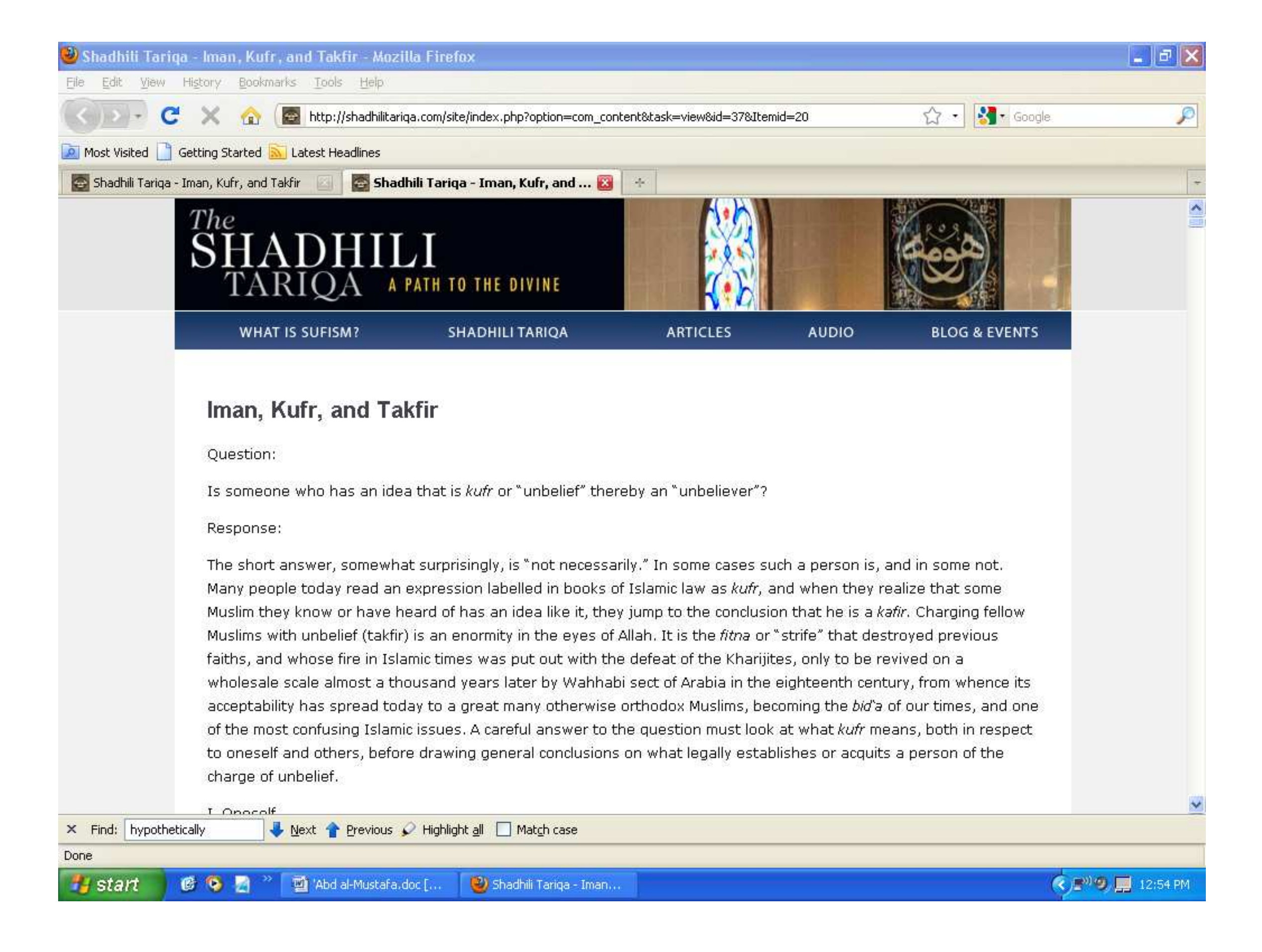
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[366] Imam Muhammad Mustafa Rida al-Qadri al-Barkati Nurt ﷺ, *Al-Malfuz Al-Sharif* (Durban: Barkaatur-Raza Publications, 2007), tr. Shaykh Abu-Muhammad 'Abd al-Hadi Al-Qadiri Radawi, 1:56-68.

[367] The Sultan of Saints, Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani ﷺ said: "As for the battle he ['Ali] fought (may Allah be well pleased with him) against Talha, az-Zubair, 'A'isha and Mu'awiya, the emphatically stated opinion of Imam Ahmad [ibn Hanbal] (may Allah bestow His mercy upon him) is that we should adopt an attitude of strict neutrality [*imsak*] toward this incident, and indeed toward all the conflict, contention and controversy that flared up amongst them, because Allah (Exalted is He) will remove it all from their midst on the Day of Resurrection. As He had said (Almighty and Glorious is He): **'And We shall strip away whatever rancor may be in their breasts. As brothers they shall be upon couches set face to face.' (15:47)**" (*Sufficient Provisions for Seekers of the Path of Truth*, 1:264). This explanation applies to the disagreements that arose between 'Ali ﷺ, Talha ﷺ, az-Zubair ﷺ, 'A'isha ﷺ and Mu'awiya ﷺ. It **does not** apply to those divant sects like the Kharijites that seceded from them.

EXHIBIT A

Here is Nuh Keller's libelous essay, "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir," against A'la Hadrat, Mujaddid Imam Ahmed Raza رضي الله عنه, published on the World Wide Web. Allah ﷻ says, ﴾**O you who believe! Be steadfast in the cause of Allah, bearing witness with justice; and let not the hatred of people prevent you from being just. Be just, that is nearer to piety and fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is acquainted with what you do**﴿ (*Tafseer Noor-ul-Irfaan*, 5:8).



Iman, Kufr, and Takfir

Question:

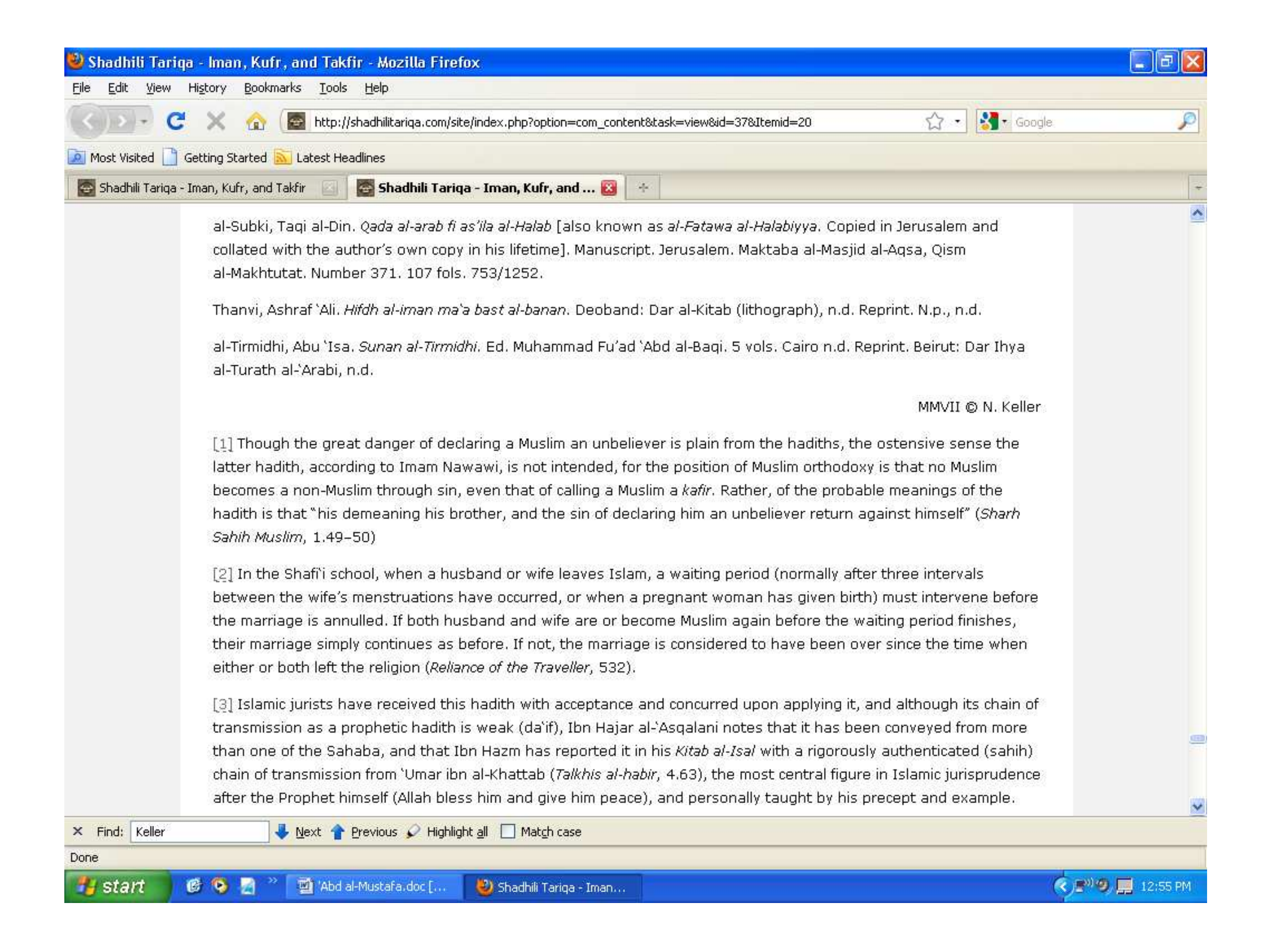
Is someone who has an idea that is *kufr* or "unbelief" thereby an "unbeliever"?

Response:

The short answer, somewhat surprisingly, is "not necessarily." In some cases such a person is, and in some not. Many people today read an expression labelled in books of Islamic law as *kufr*, and when they realize that some Muslim they know or have heard of has an idea like it, they jump to the conclusion that he is a *kafir*. Charging fellow Muslims with unbelief (takfir) is an enormity in the eyes of Allah. It is the *fitna* or "strife" that destroyed previous faiths, and whose fire in Islamic times was put out with the defeat of the Kharijites, only to be revived on a wholesale scale almost a thousand years later by Wahhabi sect of Arabia in the eighteenth century, from whence its acceptability has spread today to a great many otherwise orthodox Muslims, becoming the *bid'a* of our times, and one of the most confusing Islamic issues. A careful answer to the question must look at what *kufr* means, both in respect to oneself and others, before drawing general conclusions on what legally establishes or acquits a person of the charge of unbelief.

EXHIBIT B

The author's seal (MMVII © N. Keller) can be seen on the right-hand side before his endnotes.



al-Subki, Taqi al-Din. *Qada al-arab fi as'ila al-Halab* [also known as *al-Fatawa al-Halabiyya*. Copied in Jerusalem and collated with the author's own copy in his lifetime]. Manuscript. Jerusalem. Maktaba al-Masjid al-Aqsa, Qism al-Makhtutat. Number 371. 107 fols. 753/1252.

Thanvi, Ashraf 'Ali. *Hifdh al-iman ma'a bast al-banan*. Deoband: Dar al-Kitab (lithograph), n.d. Reprint. N.p., n.d.

al-Tirmidhi, Abu 'Isa. *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*. Ed. Muhammad Fu'ad 'Abd al-Baqi. 5 vols. Cairo n.d. Reprint. Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi, n.d.

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[1] Though the great danger of declaring a Muslim an unbeliever is plain from the hadiths, the ostensive sense the latter hadith, according to Imam Nawawi, is not intended, for the position of Muslim orthodoxy is that no Muslim becomes a non-Muslim through sin, even that of calling a Muslim a *kafir*. Rather, of the probable meanings of the hadith is that "his demeaning his brother, and the sin of declaring him an unbeliever return against himself" (*Sharh Sahih Muslim*, 1.49–50)

[2] In the Shafi'i school, when a husband or wife leaves Islam, a waiting period (normally after three intervals between the wife's menstruations have occurred, or when a pregnant woman has given birth) must intervene before the marriage is annulled. If both husband and wife are or become Muslim again before the waiting period finishes, their marriage simply continues as before. If not, the marriage is considered to have been over since the time when either or both left the religion (*Reliance of the Traveller*, 532).

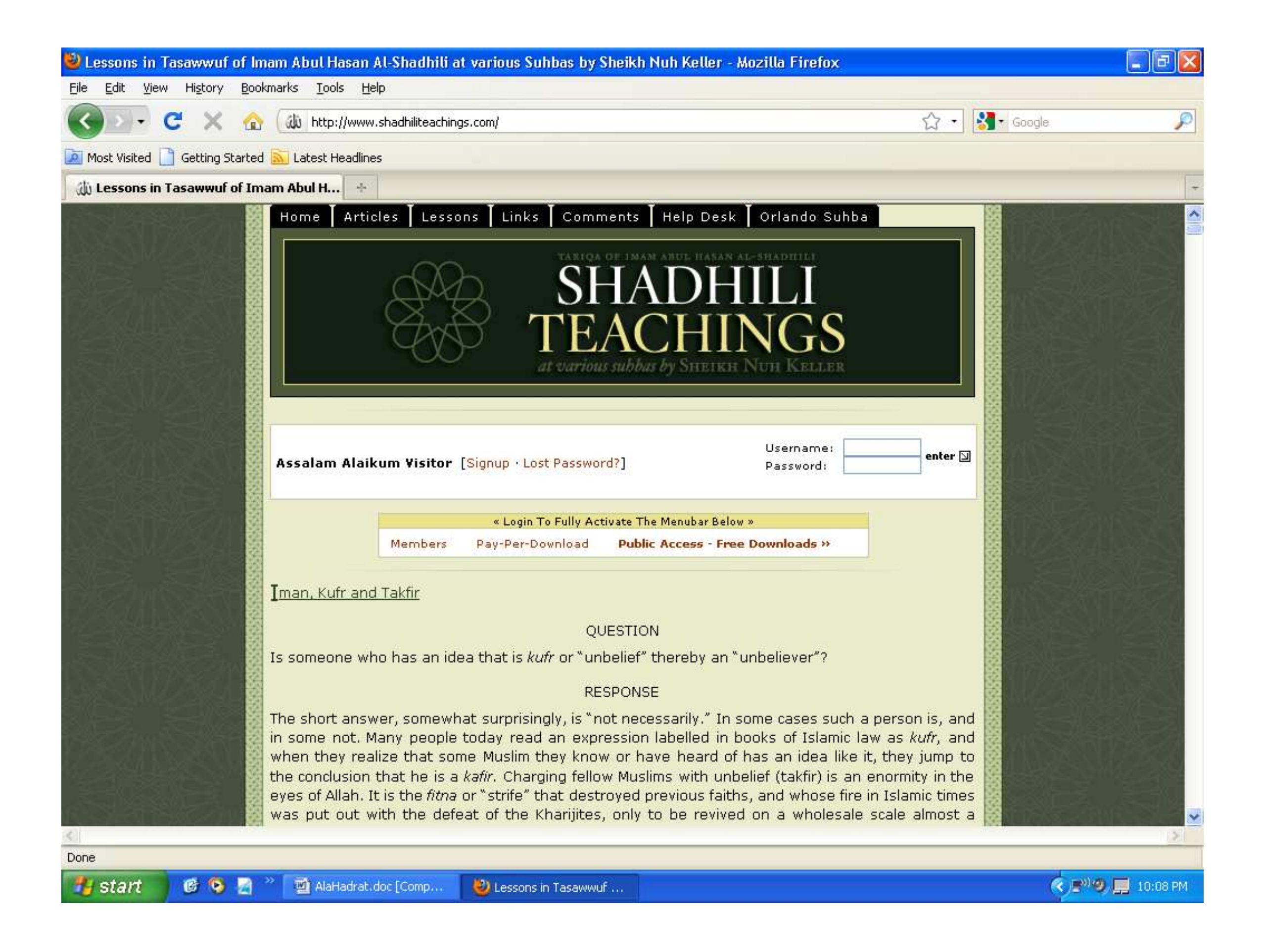
[3] Islamic jurists have received this hadith with acceptance and concurred upon applying it, and although its chain of transmission as a prophetic hadith is weak (da'if), Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani notes that it has been conveyed from more than one of the Sahaba, and that Ibn Hazm has reported it in his *Kitab al-Isal* with a rigorously authenticated (sahih) chain of transmission from 'Umar ibn al-Khattab (*Talkhis al-habir*, 4.63), the most central figure in Islamic jurisprudence after the Prophet himself (Allah bless him and give him peace), and personally taught by his precept and example.

In *Tamheedul Iman*, A'la Hadrat, Mujaddid Imam Ahmed Raza ﵁ wrote: "It is quite shameless, cruel and impious of the insolent people to bring against me the false charge of declaring other people as disbelievers too quickly. Certainly, they have invented a lie. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ says, and whatever he says is right: **'When you have no sense of shame, do whatever you want**[368]**.'**"

[368] *Thesis*, 4:132.

EXHIBIT C

This apologetic is also available at http://shadhiliteachings.com/ under articles, "Iman, Kufr, and Takfir."



Lessons in Tasawwuf of Imam Abul Hasan Al-Shadhili at various Suhbas by Sheikh Nuh Keller - Mozilla Firefox

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Iman, Kufr and Takfir

QUESTION

Is someone who has an idea that is *kufr* or "unbelief" thereby an "unbeliever"?

RESPONSE

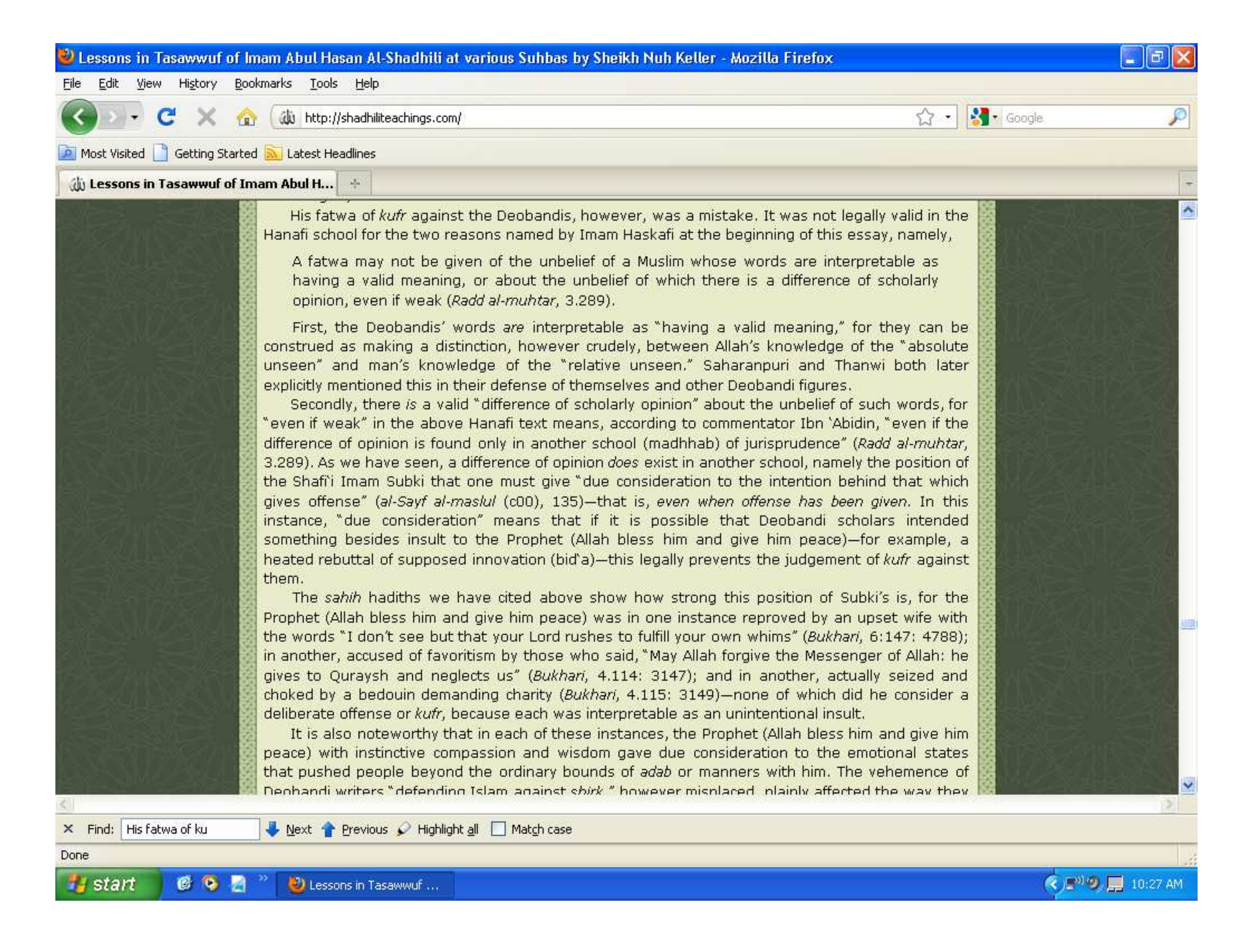
The short answer, somewhat surprisingly, is "not necessarily." In some cases such a person is, and in some not. Many people today read an expression labelled in books of Islamic law as *kufr*, and when they realize that some Muslim they know or have heard of has an idea like it, they jump to the conclusion that he is a *kafir*. Charging fellow Muslims with unbelief (takfir) is an enormity in the eyes of Allah. It is the *fitna* or "strife" that destroyed previous faiths, and whose fire in Islamic times was put out with the defeat of the Kharijites, only to be revived on a wholesale scale almost a

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EXHIBT D

The summary that we excerpted verbatim can be seen below. Sayyiduna Ziyad ibn Hudair ؓ reported that, Sayyiduna Umar ؓ said: “Do you know what can destroy Islam?” I said: “No.” He answered: “It is destroyed by the errors of scholars, the argument of the hypocrites about the Book of Allah, and the opinions of the misguided leaders” (*Mishkatul Masabih*)[369].



His fatwa of *kufr* against the Deobandis, however, was a mistake. It was not legally valid in the Hanafi school for the two reasons named by Imam Haskafi at the beginning of this essay, namely,

> A fatwa may not be given of the unbelief of a Muslim whose words are interpretable as having a valid meaning, or about the unbelief of which there is a difference of scholarly opinion, even if weak (*Radd al-muhtar*, 3.289).

First, the Deobandis' words *are* interpretable as "having a valid meaning," for they can be construed as making a distinction, however crudely, between Allah's knowledge of the "absolute unseen" and man's knowledge of the "relative unseen." Saharanpuri and Thanwi both later explicitly mentioned this in their defense of themselves and other Deobandi figures.

Secondly, there *is* a valid "difference of scholarly opinion" about the unbelief of such words, for "even if weak" in the above Hanafi text means, according to commentator Ibn 'Abidin, "even if the difference of opinion is found only in another school (madhhab) of jurisprudence" (*Radd al-muhtar*, 3.289). As we have seen, a difference of opinion *does* exist in another school, namely the position of the Shafi'i Imam Subki that one must give "due consideration to the intention behind that which gives offense" (*al-Sayf al-maslul* (c00), 135)—that is, *even when offense has been given*. In this instance, "due consideration" means that if it is possible that Deobandi scholars intended something besides insult to the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace)—for example, a heated rebuttal of supposed innovation (bid'a)—this legally prevents the judgement of *kufr* against them.

The *sahih* hadiths we have cited above show how strong this position of Subki's is, for the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was in one instance reproved by an upset wife with the words "I don't see but that your Lord rushes to fulfill your own whims" (*Bukhari*, 6:147: 4788); in another, accused of favoritism by those who said, "May Allah forgive the Messenger of Allah: he gives to Quraysh and neglects us" (*Bukhari*, 4.114: 3147); and in another, actually seized and choked by a bedouin demanding charity (*Bukhari*, 4.115: 3149)—none of which did he consider a deliberate offense or *kufr*, because each was interpretable as an unintentional insult.

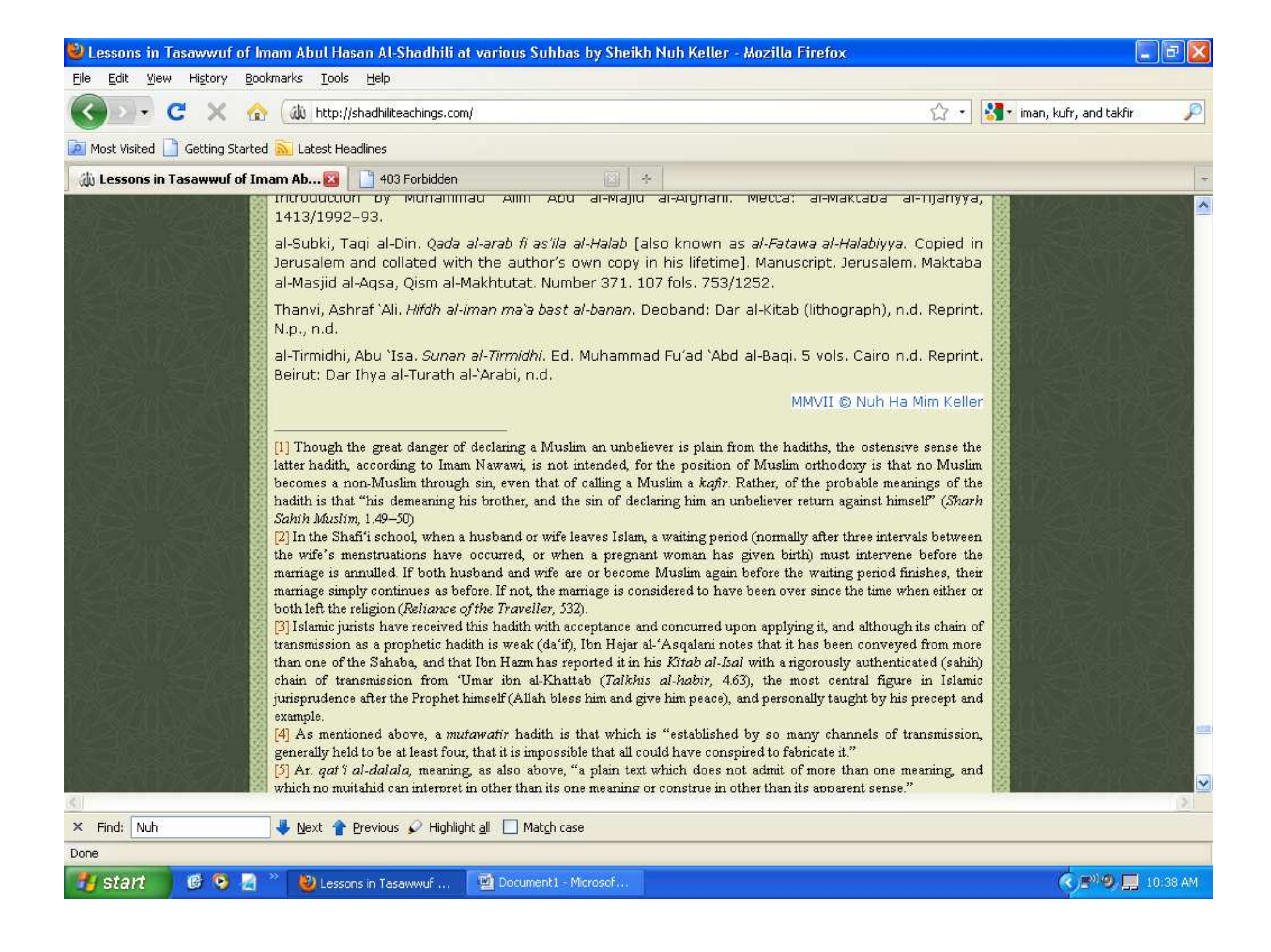
It is also noteworthy that in each of these instances, the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) with instinctive compassion and wisdom gave due consideration to the emotional states that pushed people beyond the ordinary bounds of *adab* or manners with him. The vehemence of Deobandi writers "defending Islam against *shirk*," however misplaced, plainly affected the way they

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369 *Thesis*, 4:145.

EXHIBIT E

The author's seal (MMVII © Nuh Ha Mim Keller) can be seen in full on this website.



1413/1992–93.

al-Subki, Taqi al-Din. *Qada al-arab fi as'ila al-Halab* [also known as *al-Fatawa al-Halabiyya*. Copied in Jerusalem and collated with the author's own copy in his lifetime]. Manuscript. Jerusalem. Maktaba al-Masjid al-Aqsa, Qism al-Makhtutat. Number 371. 107 fols. 753/1252.

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al-Tirmidhi, Abu 'Isa. *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*. Ed. Muhammad Fu'ad 'Abd al-Baqi. 5 vols. Cairo n.d. Reprint. Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi, n.d.

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[2] In the Shafi'i school, when a husband or wife leaves Islam, a waiting period (normally after three intervals between the wife's menstruations have occurred, or when a pregnant woman has given birth) must intervene before the marriage is annulled. If both husband and wife are or become Muslim again before the waiting period finishes, their marriage simply continues as before. If not, the marriage is considered to have been over since the time when either or both left the religion (*Reliance of the Traveller*, 532).

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[4] As mentioned above, a *mutawatir* hadith is that which is "established by so many channels of transmission, generally held to be at least four, that it is impossible that all could have conspired to fabricate it."

[5] Ar. *qat'i al-dalala*, meaning, as also above, "a plain text which does not admit of more than one meaning, and which no mujtahid can interpret in other than its one meaning or construe in other than its apparent sense."

EXHIBIT F



Question: Was Ibn Abd al-Wahhab a great reformer and scholar?

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Darul Uloom Deoband - India

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Question: 5177 India

Assalamualaikum, Mufti sahab, I am khaleel 23 year old,And i want to know that what should be our Aqeeda about the Barelvees,because i have seen them criticising Deoband seminary in their Books&in their speeches.They write very Wrong about Deoband Ulama.And they call NAJADI TO DEOBAND ULAMA.And i want to know what is NAJAD.And also What should be our Aqeeda about JAMAAT-E-ISLAMI HIND.

Answer: 5177 18 Jul, 2008

(Fatwa: 994/834=B-1429)

Najdi is called one who is attributed to a great reformer and scholar Hadhrat Shiakh Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab Najdi (رحمة الله عليه). This great reformist was accused of many things; therefore the opponents attribute us to him for irritating us. It is useful to study the book ?Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab ke khilaf propaganda aur Hindustan ke Ulam-e- Haq per uske asaraat? written by Hadhrat Maulana Manzoor Nomani.
(2) If you study the ?Dastoorat? of Jamat Islami Hind, then you will come to know that many of their thoughts are deviated from the right path. Also, if you study the book: ?Khilafat w Mulukia? you will know how misleading thoughts they have about the companions of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

Allah (Subhana Wa Ta'ala) Knows Best

Darul Ifta, Darul Uloom Deoband

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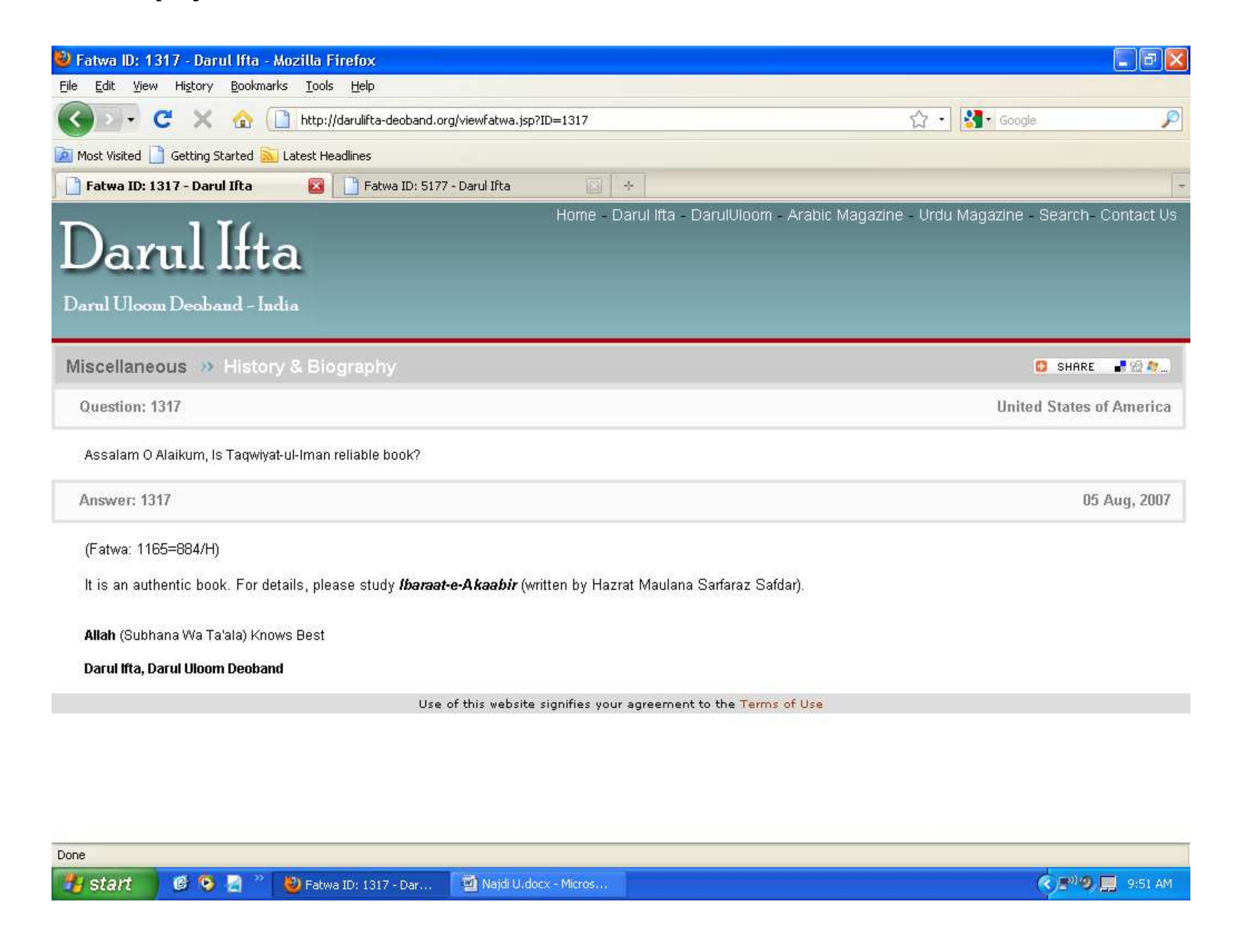
Answer: "Yes, but a reviver of corrupt ideas and dubious beliefs whose followers took up the sword against the Commander of the Faithful and proclaimed him the head of the rebels (*bughat*) of his time, like the Khawarij[370]". This is the mainstream view as represented by Hadrat Ibn Abidin al-Hanafi ﷺ in his *Radd al-Muhtar*.

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[370] Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, *Encyclopedia of Islamic Doctrine: Beliefs* (Mountain View: As-Sunna Foundation of America Publications, 1998), 1:185. Bold is the compiler's emphasis.

EXHIBIT G

Darul Ifta, Daral Uloom Deoband (India), is assuring an American Muslim that *Taqwiyat al-Iman* is “an authentic book.”



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Darul Ifta

Darul Uloom Deoband - India

Miscellaneous » History & Biography

Question: 1317 | United States of America

Assalam O Alaikum, Is Taqwiyat-ul-Iman reliable book?

Answer: 1317 | 05 Aug, 2007

(Fatwa: 1165=884/H)

It is an authentic book. For details, please study ***Ibaraat-e-Akaabir*** (written by Hazrat Maulana Sarfaraz Safdar).

Allah (Subhana Wa Ta'ala) Knows Best

Darul Ifta, Darul Uloom Deoband

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The scholars of Deoband forget that those who contridict the belief of the Saved Group and oppose them in their writings, such as Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, and Ismail Dihlawi are outside mainstream Islam and even farther from the school of the Salaf or the pious predecessors.
